

W. H. i.

The Unreasonableness of
DEISM,
Or the Certainty of a
Divine Revelation,

E V I N C ' D
From the Dictates of REASON in Ge-
neral, and the Evidence of our Holy Chri-
stian Faith in Particular.

With some Reflections on our
Modern Pretenders to *Free-Thinking*.

A L S O
MODERN PLEAS for *Anarchy* and
Rebellion, Review'd; Or a particular Exami-
nation of the Senses of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*,
concerning the Measures of Submission to
the Civil Power.

By JOSEPH SMITH.

Nullos esse Deos, inane cœlum
Affirmat SELIUS: probatque, quod se
Factum, dum negat hæc, videt beatum. Martial.

L O N D O N:

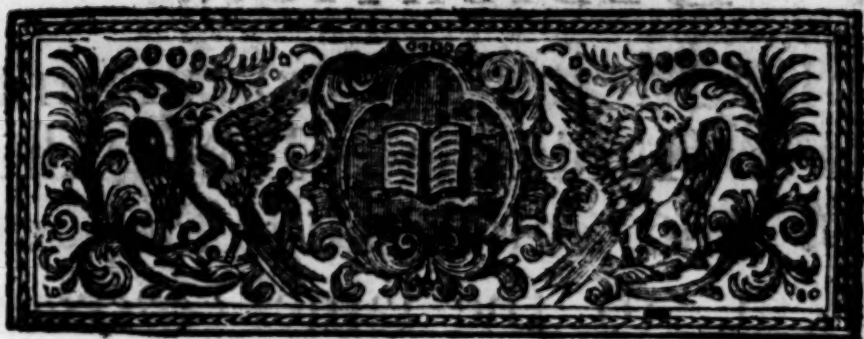
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TO THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

FRANCIS,

Lord Bishop of

ROCHESTER.

MY LORD,

AS the earlier Part of my
Studies had the Ho-
nour of Your Lord-
ship's kind Regard, I am en-
cou-

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courag'd humbly to present these (I think, MY LORD) the *last* and concluding Part of them, to the same *generous Candour*, and good Nature. The true and real *Goodness*, both of the Subjects, and my Intentions, is the best Apology I can make for this Second Tryal of Your Condescension, and will, I hope, excuse me to you and all the World.

THO' I am very far from the Arrogance of thinking any Thing in the whole Work able to bear the Inspection of Your Lordship's exact Judgment; Yet I can't but flatter my self, some of the latter
Parts

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Parts of it will appear considerable, being immediately supported by Your own inimitable Pen.

PERMIT me now, MY LORD, only to add, I am extremely rejoic'd at the Returns of Your Health; May the Infinite Goodness of Almighty God long continue it, for the Good of His Church in this World, and the greater encrease of Your own Glory in the next.

*I am, my Lord, Your most
Dutiful, and most
Obedient Servant,
JOSEPH SMITH.*

DEDICATION.

Part of it will appear com-
 mune, being immediately
 supported by Your own in-
 mutable Power.

Permit me now to Lord
 only to send, I am, I am
 proud and a History of Your
 History; I am, I am
 Godness of the History, God
 long come, for the Good
 of the Church in the World
 and the great end of it
 to your glory in the next

I am, I am, I am, I am
 I am, I am, I am, I am
 I am, I am, I am, I am
 I am, I am, I am, I am



THE PREFACE.

SUCH is the barbarous Malice, and such the sordid Ignorance of the Age, That it is almost impossible for a Man to express an honest and true Sense for any of the most establish'd Truths of Religion, or show his just Abhorrence of either their open or secret Enemies, but he immediately pulls on himself from all Quarters, the Load and Charge of Popery. The Word Protestant is of late grown of prodigious Extent, and neither the Authority of Church or State is sufficient to bound it. What may be, and what we actually feel

feel to be, the Consequences of this mad Humour, is dreadful to think on. Such daring Impudence and Blasphemy as every Day almost presents itself, under this pretence, too sadly will convince all discerning honest Men, that it is possible for a Wretch to call himself a Protestant, and yet be worse in his Principles than a Turk, or a Pagan. Base and Villanous were the Hand that moves this Pen, if ever any thing should come from it in favour of any of those Errors of Popery, which were justly condemn'd by our blessed Reformers; But that the being sincerely in the Interest of a Church, at the Thoughts of which Popery it self trembles, should be made a Reason for the Imputation of that very Popery upon those who show such an honest regard to it, is an Iniquity that deserves a sharper Animadversion than I am willing to speak.

THO' I must own I have had my share of this sort of Abuse: Yet the bare acquitting of a Character so mean and private as mine, had not made it worth the mentioning. And indeed did we see this Practice only from News-Writers, mean and groveling Pens; Wretches who Blaspheme for Bread; whoever were struck at by it, it were not worth the minding; But to find the whole Col-
lective

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lective Body of the Clergy thus treated, and a Convocation it self insulted in this manner, by Pens of such a Character, that I am really ashamed to Name, is what certainly would justify harder Words than some will be willing to bear.

IN the Name of God, let it be consider'd! Is all Ecclesiastical Power, Popery? And the most regular Process, Persecution? What shall we stop at by this way of Arguing? I meddle not with the Merit of any particular Cause, but both the Laws of God and the Land, have in my Thoughts justly made the regular Conventions of the Clergy proper Judges of either Heresy, Blasphemy, or Disorder, when it shall happen in the Church; and I must own, 'tis with Concern I see their Authority made a Jest of by those who perhaps ought to have felt it.

IT were heartily to be wish'd, notwithstanding all the sad Stories we have lately been entertain'd with about Inquisitions and Persecutions, that our Casuists and Divines at least would teach us to distinguish between the proper Use, and the Abuse of Ecclesiastical Power; that they would take some pains to convince us that Blasphemy and Heresy may be justly punish'd

nish'd and discourag'd, tho' the Injustice and Oppression of such Pretences in other Countries, are never so much to be condemn'd. This would be to set Things upon their proper Foundations, and we should then be fully taught to know the Difference between the regular and truly justifiable Authority of the Church of England, and the abominable Exorbitances of the Church of Rome.

BUT what we are at present engaging for, will not, I presume, be call'd either Popery or Persecution: Our present Design, at least in the first Part of it, leads us only to plead for Christianity in general; and could we but have Reason to hope we might gain our Point so far, the Way would be pav'd towards a greater Reverence for the Church of England in particular. In order the more effectually to do this, we have endeavour'd to show the Unreasonableness of Deism, or the pretending to believe there is such a Being as a God, and yet at the same time denying such a thing as a Particular and Divine Revelation of his Will. As to the Part, I in particular have had in it, I will not pretend to say much; for as I cannot persuade my self to the Vanity of saying any thing in its favour, neither

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ther am I willing to lessen my self too much in the courteous Reader's Thoughts, by that unnatural Fault in an Author, too great an Excess of Modesty. The Subject it self is too good and important to need any Apology for engaging in it; and the particular Incitements thereto, so raging and provoking, that nothing, I am sure, can be said against the Seasonableness of it.

*NEVER certainly since Christianity had a Being, and has been publickly profess'd in this Nation, has it met with more impudent and daring Affronts, than at this Time, it is daily, I might say hourly assaulted with: It is high Time therefore certainly to look back on the Great and First Foundations of our Faith, and raise on them proper Batteries to beat down the vain Pretences of such bold Gainsayers. Who they are that make this necessary with their Characters, is what we are very little concern'd with; you may be very sure they are neither of them worth your Knowledge, and very unfit for your imitation: But how you may be effectually arm'd against all their possible Attacks, is an Enquiry, worthy of your most serious regard. In order to your being so, I have endeavour'd with some Pains to lay before you in the following Work, every thing that I could possibly collect to
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have been said, either by them or their Fore-fathers in this kind of Iniquity against our holy Faith; from which I hope, I may be bold to conclude thus much, that the Opposition which is made to it, will appear as absurd and unreasonable, as it is wicked and abominable.

THE Second Discourse, to those who have before read the first Volume of Modern Pleas, will easily appear to be a Continuation of the Work. If the Argument of it should be thought old and stale, I can assure you, it was not thought so when I first engag'd in it: Most part of the Papers have been written by me some time, and took up my Thoughts, when the Book call'd the Measures of Submission was more talk'd of. Many Interruptions, which the Particular wrangle of the Times has given me, have till now hinder'd their Appearance from the Press; however, as I have upon some other Occasions promis'd them to the Public, they are now presented. The Propositions laid down by me in the first Part of Modern Pleas, oblig'd me too to consider how the Methods there mention'd of arguing in favour of Dissenters, might not only in the Consequence be made destructive of the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion, and more immediately to outrage some of
its

its Prime and Fundamental Articles in particular: But that they were destructive of the Peace of the Church, and render'd Unity among Christians in general, impracticable. But every Thing I design'd to have insisted on of that kind, having been so fully and well manag'd by several Gentlemen, who have oppos'd themselves to some of the late Writings of the Bishop of Bangor; I find my self Anticipated in that Part. This I mention to inform you, that you have the whole of what I now intend on the Head of Modern Pleas; I must further own to you, such of late have been the Methods of managing of Controversy, that tho' neither my Age, nor any particular Opposition that has been made against me, can in the least be pleaded in my Excuse: Yet sick of the ill Nature and unfair Perverseness of the present Generation, I shall endeavour for the future, less to subject my self to the Malice of those, who, I have found, may indeed be enrag'd, but never convinc'd.

JO. SMITH.



Modern PLEAS, &c.

IT was the Complaint of * *Colerius* in his Time, that there never were so many *Atheists* in *Italy*, and *Germany*, as then. † *Marcennus*, another Observer of the growth of these Monsters, mentions Fifty Thousand in the single City of *Paris*. A Man has very little Temptation to draw Parallels of this kind, and his Natural fondness of his own Country, will almost irresistably move him to shift an imputation of this reproachful Nature, as far as he can from it: But when a Plague, or Infection Reigns, and seems almost Universally Predominant, it will always be an Important Question, whether it is better, to hush People in security, and so let the Infection insensibly spread, or warn them of the Danger, that they may fly the Infection? Believe me, it is with no pleasure I shall ever enter into the sad detail of Wretches of this Stamp at present among us; there has not been any thing in my Observation in their *Manners*, as well as *Principles*, at all inviting; but vain is it to dissemble in the Point, they are too numerous

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* *Lib. de Immortal. Anima.* † *Anno 1238. ad finem Henrici tertii,*
Pag. 645.

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merous to be encourag'd even by Silence, and too Impudent and daring to Escape the Notice of the most Negligent and Supine.

THERE have, no doubt of it, at all Times, and in all Places, been Men of Wicked, and Blasphemous Spirits, and no Laws, or Measures can be so well Concerted as entirely to prevent their ExcurSIONS: But then they whisper'd their Inpieties only in their secret Cabals, and had the Satisfaction of thinking the darkness should cover them, and their Security lay in being as Secret as they were Wicked. *Matthew Paris* tells us, *Henry the Lansgrave of Hessen*, heard the Emperor *Frederick* say, * *There were three Jugglers; Moses, Christ, and Mahomet.* One of our Modern † *Virtuosi* turns the Tables tother way, and will have even the last a true Prophet, and so has extended the Catholick Church to the degree of taking in *Turks, Jews, and Infidels*, and deems they may all in his profound way of thinking, be call'd Christians; and this he has thought fit to do Publickly, Openly, in the Face of the Sun, even from the Press. Whence this, and many more such Men of Licence, take their Encouragements, is hard to determine, but the unaccountable Lengths several of them have lately run, require perhaps something (at least with them) more forcible than Argument to stop their Course. Only the Searcher of Hearts it is certain, can fully Judge of the Secret Springs, and Wheels on which the Mind does move; but this is as certain, such an Abominable, and Licentious way of Writing, as well as talking, has of late obtain'd and

* *Tres Praestigatores, Moses, Christus & Mahomet, uti mundo dominarentur totum populum, sibi contemporaneum Seduxisse. † Vide Toland's Nazarenus.*

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and almost grown in Fashion, as did not use formerly to be Tolerated. Some Men may not be able to see the Consequences of their Tenets, others may not be willing, others regardless of what they are; whether ills of this Nature flow from Ignorance, Precipitation, or design'd Villany, their Mischievous Influences are in each case much the same; and as it is very certain there will be always too many willing to take Advantage of such Proceedings, it is exceeding pity any Man's Pride, or Folly, or call it what you will, should be so far indulg'd, as to pull these Calamities upon us.

I AM very sure no Man's Natural Temper, can more forcibly encline him to the soft, and easie Methods of Reason, and Persuasion, than my own; but I can't help freely professing some Tempers seem very little to be Affected that way, and whoever deals with them in it, may show well enough the fineness of his Wit, but in the result (if he had in his Hands the Powers of Discipline) it will prove at last a wretched Mark of his Wisdom. There is not perhaps in Humane Nature a greater Infelicity, than that one single sad mistake, of what we call *Liberty* and *Freedom*; and tho' the Natural Pride, and Vanity of our Minds, may give us the Strongest bent to entertain it; yet there has not any thing produc'd more wild Confusion throughout the World. When the Reins of Power are left loose, and broken, and every thing that seems best in our own Eyes, is made the decisive rule of our Conduct, Liberty will Naturally degenerate into Licentiousness, and Men may talk as many soft and fine things as they please, but without the Restraint of Laws, yea and those too of this World, all Nature would be unhing'd, and the Earth worse than a Forest of wild Beasts.

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I AM very sensible, how invidious any Observations of this Nature are at this Time, and how readily he that employs either his Thoughts, or his Pen about them, is cry'd out against, as of a Persecuting Spirit, and an Enemy to the Lenity of our Laws; but is there after all no Bounds to Indulgence, as well as Rigour? Must the Good Nature of our Legislature to Ignorance and Mistake, be constru'd to Encourage the most impudent, and palpable Blasphemy? No Laws certainly ought to be strain'd to this Degree. The many Excellent Remedies our Ancestors have convey'd down to us against such flagrant Out-rage as this, sure were not Design'd to be Frustrated by any Modern Advances! Bare Impunity in this Case seems to be little less than betraying the whole of Christianity, and if any thing of that Nature does happen, 'tis to be hop'd 'tis only owing to those, who have the proper Power of Punishing, being not sufficiently inform'd of it.

IN some of our *Modern Ideas* of the Church indeed, we have had it represented to us, a Society without any of those *Bands*, and *Ligaments*, which alone, as such, must hold, and tie it together; but these are to be taken to be only the idle Sallies of Men, who put no end to the fondness of what they have once conceiv'd; and whatever is the Consequence will eternally Dandle, and Cherish the Brats of their own vain Imaginations. These, as their way of thinking is always peculiar to themselves, and on that Account valu'd both by themselves, and their Admirers, cou'd not perhaps have a greater punishment, than to be treated with neglect and scorn, and be suffer'd to run on unmolested till they are giddy in the Wild Circle of their
own

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own Delirium ; but as there are Wicked Men always willing, like drowning Persons, to catch hold of every Weed, and all who deserve the Lashes of Discipline, are ever ready to cry out against it ; it cannot surely be improper to let such Wretches feel, that as Blasphemy is in its Nature as Capital as Treason, it has too its just Punishments in this World, as well as the next.

WE all know it is natural enough for the Villain, and the Traytor, to rail at the Severities of the *Axe*, and the *Gibbet* ; but the tenderest Legislature has never made that a Reason to abolish their use ; and yet *Treason* and *Robbery* is what Men must account for in the other World, as well as *Blasphemy*. Nor are the Penalties inflicted on the Delinquent more conducive to his Reformation, in the one Case than the other ; it being no more in the reach of *Hanging* or *Beheading*, to make a Man sincerely *Honest* or *Loyal*, than *Religious*. However, if they receive no Benefit (which sometimes they may too) by such applications, yet it is certain Society does : And certainly it must be allow'd some degree of Prudence, when a Man has got the Plague, so that he is past all hopes of Cure himself, to remove him to a *Pest-House*, that he may not infect others.

BUT as every thing we would pretend to offer of this kind, is with the utmost deference to those in whose Hands is lodg'd the Power of punishing Evil-doers, and giving just Praise and Commendation to them that do well : So we would not have it imagined, we can entertain the Thought, that the Corrections of Power are plac'd in every private Hand. No ! Should *Atheism* and Infidelity pour upon us with never such a Torrent of Licence, and Impunity ;

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should the general Bent and Humour turn never so much on Novelty and Innovation; should Blasphemy; and Preferment, go never so much Hand in Hand; should such general Corruption, and Apostacy take place, in such a degree, that all Ranks and Conditions seem'd as it were to be Sick, and Spurn at their old and honest Rules of Life: Yet it is still our Duty to act within our proper Spheres, and not think to propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ himself, by Rage and unlawful Violence.

BUT tho' it is admitted, the Power of Censuring, and punishing Wickedness, and Blasphemy, in an Authoritative way, is only the Province of those whom Providence has set over us for that purpose; and however necessary the use of such a Power may be in the ordinary Methods of the same Providence, for the Preserving and Maintaining the Purity of the Church, yet it must never be assum'd in an irregular Way: This however, is every Body's Duty, and Business too, as far as their Capacities extend, to oppose the Absurdity, as well as Wickedness of the Enemies of our Faith: The power of Reason and Argument may, and ought to be used by all; and every thing we can possibly collect of this Kind, will not unprofitably employ our Thoughts, nor be without use at any Time, but more especially at this.

THE Men of *Metaphysicks* may probably Quarrel with us, for ushering in a profess'd Discourse against *Deism*, with such frequent and repeated mention of *Atheism*, as if the Terms were Synonymous, and the Ideas convey'd by them the same. It may be suggested the Compliment of some Distinction, is at least due to the Former; but as Reason, as well as Revelation assures us 'tis only the *Fool*, the Superficial

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cial unthinking Fellow, can *say in his Heart, There is no God*; so none but the same *Fool*, can think, or believe he has not reveal'd himself to us his Creatures. The same incogitancy, and want of Thought and Reflection, holds in the one Case, as well as the other, and it is as easy for a Man of sober Reason to believe, *There is no God*, as that that God has not reveal'd himself to humane Nature, in some fix'd and positive Rules of Life.

THE evincing of this, is what we would at present engage in, and a serious Consideration of the three following Particulars, will, we hope, in some degree contribute to that End, *viz.*

FIRST, That the very Notion, or Belief of a God, does in the Nature, and Reason of the thing infer or necessarily imply, a Revelation of his Will.

SECONDLY, That the particular Attestations he has given us of the matter of Fact, *viz.* A Revelation of his Will, leaves a rational Man no possibility of Doubting, that he has reveal'd himself to us.

THIRDLY, The Consequence of which is, That *Deism*, or the not believing such a thing as a *Revelation* of the Will of God, in that which we call Religion, is the most absurd and irrational, as well as impious Notion a Man can well entertain, or be guilty of.

BY a Revelation of the Will of God, I understand not those *fixt and stated Notices of Good and Evil*; or, what some of our Modern *Enthusiasts*, as well as *Deists*, call the *Light Within*, or the natural and com-

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mon Dictates of *Reason* and *Conscience*; but such an immediate, and explicit Declaration of his Will, as was made to the antient Patriarchs, and is now convey'd down to us by *Moses* and the Prophets, and *Christ* and his Apostles, and has indeed been understood by all Mankind, wherever Revelation, in Points of Religion, has been at all pretended. I have the rather thought it proper to explain my self in this particular Manner, that the Reader may perceive my Thoughts are levell'd against the *Deist*, as he declares himself to dissent from every Revelation of this kind, and charges the very Notion of it in general, as absurd and irrational, tho' at the same time he professes the belief of a God.

FIRST then it is insisted, that the very Notion, or Belief of a God, does in the Nature and Reason of the thing infer, or necessarily suppose a Revelation of his Will.

THE least reflection on the infinite Perfection and Excellence of the Deity, will, of it self, raise in a thinking Breast the deepest Reverence and Awe of it: And that God is a Being infinitely Perfect, the Men we have to deal with are so fully convinc'd of, that they will pretend in the general to have the same Sense of it as we have. The Wisdom, Goodness, Power, and every other Perfection of his Nature, they tell us, they are free to acknowledge, and the whole Dispute there seems between us, is not the reality of these Attributes in God, but the Consequences thence arising. Wicked, and Thoughtless as they are, they have not thought fit to rob God of his essential Perfections, but only such exercises of them, as are ungrateful to their Lusts; and therefore it is they will not have him to see, and observe
their

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their Actions, because they know it must be very bad for them if he does.

BUT were we to indulge these Men so far, as to suppose the infinite Perfections of God, were to be entirely abstracted from any relation to us; yet from thence to conclude a thorough neglect, and disregard of them, is not our way of thinking in any other Case. Goodness and Excellence in all other Instances will strike in upon our Thoughts, and the most indifferent Spectator cannot behold them in a resplendent Degree, without having his Tongue fill'd with every thing the most enlarg'd Panegyric, and awful Wonder can Suggest. It has been observ'd, and I think justly too, that the Worship of the Sun has of all Idolatry been the most Natural, and rational, only on the Account of its being so remarkably Glorious. And indeed, a Man must strangely dissemble his own Experience, as well as the common Sense of all Mankind, who can tell us he has observed any the lowest degrees of Beauty and Perfection, and not found in himself a natural Desire of speaking in its Praise. Where is there a Sot so stupid, that when he thinks, and sees him to be so, can forbear speaking well of a Great and Good Man? There seems to be nothing in humane Nature so sordid, and low in its reflections, but what has some Sense and touch of this kind; and if we look into the higher and more sublime Way of thinking, what else is the Fire, and most exalted Flame and Ardour of Poetry, (of which the Men we are engag'd with are particularly fond) but one continu'd Encomium on such Occasions? Our Idea's are never more naturally enlarg'd, nor our Language Stronger, and more Pompous, than when they have Virtue and Goodness for their Subject; and the fondness we have for such Entertainments

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ments, must, one would think, alone demonstrate them natural to the Mind of Man. This inborn Sense of Things, when it is apply'd to the Deity, rises exceedingly higher; for when it is consider'd, all we can possibly observe in all the Beauties and Wonders of the Creation, are but faint hints and resemblances of the same Perfections in an infinite degree, in their Great and Tremendous Creator; certainly, not only our Idea's will be more expanse, and sublime, but our very diction too will bear a part, and strive at least when we are thus impress'd, to Cloath our Thoughts in a proper Dress. If the bare View of the Glories of the Sun has naturally struck the World with the Notion of Religion, and paying it divine Honours; the Reason holds much stronger when we reflect on the Glories of him that made the Sun, and the conclusion in such a Case must certainly be not only more forcible, but irresistible.

It will not I think be contended, that if upon the bare Consideration of the excellency, and Perfection of the Deity, it is both natural and rational to think and speak well of him, or, in divine Language, to give him the Honour due to his Name; then what we call Religion, or paying him divine Worship, is at all to be disputed the Consequence; because the Speaking well of, or Praising the Lord, is in itself the highest and most exalted part of Religion. I would not be thought to exclude the petitionary Part, but most certainly in the Comparison, this must bear the preference; as it is in itself more Noble and Generous to Praise than Petition, so 'tis in its Nature more lasting and durable. For when all our Wants shall cease, and consequently our occasions for Petitions, the Praises of the Deity shall still continue

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tinue, and be the employment of Men, and Angels to all Eternity.

MY Design in what is here offer'd concerning the natural Notion, every reasonable Man must have of the Glory, and infinite Perfection of the Deity, is plainly this: (For plainness ought to be studied in Points of this Importance) That as the lower, infinitely lower degrees of Perfection and Beauty in the Creatures, naturally strike us with the Sentiments of Love, and force from our Tongues something in their Praise; so upon the same Principles of Reasoning, 'tis impossible to entertain any thoughts of the Glory and Perfection of God, without paying him that tribute of Praise and Worship, which has all the World over, made a considerable Part of what we call Religion; consequently the paying to him such Worship and Praise, is the natural dictate of Reason; and a contrary Conclusion is as absur'd and irrational, as it is impious and Wicked.

BUT could we suppose humane Reason lost to all Sense of the Charms of infinite Beauty, and Excellence; yet when we consider the Deity in that relation it bears to us, the Argument for the Duty, and rationality of paying him Worship, yet more encreases upon us. He that is Master of Reason enough to reflect on the Nature and Dignity of his own Being, and has Thought sufficient to consider the vast Obligations he lies under to his Maker, for that one single Act of his Goodness, the making him a Man, cannot be so stupid, but to conclude the Duty of acknowledgment, and Gratitude. To have no Sense of a Benefit, especially of such a Nature in which every Breath we breath must remind us, is to sink our selves, and our Boasted Reason below the meanest

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est Part of the Creation. The *Oxe*, and the *Ass*, reason higher than this, and as the one never shews himself unmindful of his *owner*, neither is the other insensible of his *Masters Cribb*. A Sense of Gratitude seems interwoven in the whole of the Creation, and is of all other Virtues, the hardest to be wholly eras'd. In humane Nature nothing looks more Shocking and Odious, than any failures of this kind, and even in the common Incidents of Life, there is not any thing so hateful, as an ungrateful Person; 'tis like Lying and Perfidy, every where Condemn'd, and is such an open violation of Nature as well as Reason, that the most abandon'd will not pretend to plead for it. Were a Man to study the blackest Characters that can possibly be fix'd on human Nature, the Design were not half finish'd, without this Master-piece of Wickedness were put in the List, and 'tis perhaps impossible for a Man to be a compleat Villain, except he can be prov'd an ungrateful one. 'Tis in short, as Monstrous and Unnatural to the Mind, as the Head of a *Lyon*, or a *Bear* were to the Body: And yet, as Monstrous and Unnatural as this quality must be, wherever it is found, never can it be aggravated in a blacker and more enormous Degree, than when it shows it self in a neglect of the Goodness and Bounty of our Maker. Shall the Acquisitions of Fortune, the being rescu'd from Danger, with every other little Advantage of Life, throw themselves with irresistible force on the Memory, and fill all Tongues with the Praises of the kind Benefactors; and yet at last must the greatest of all Benefactors alone be forgotten? Tell me ye Men of Reason, can this be reasonable? No certainly! Reason and Gratitude must in this Case be inseparable, and 'tis impossible to suppose the being of the one, without the other.

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FURTHER to expatiate on particulars must surely be needless in a Point so plain. The Infinite Beauty and Perfection then of the Deity on one side, and his Goodness, and Beneficence to us, on the other, Naturally leading us (on the Belief of a Deity) to pay him those acknowledgments of Praise, and Thanks, which make up the noblest part of what we call Religion; our Thoughts next by the easiest Progression turn on that way of doing this, as will be most acceptable to him. For it is impossible for us to be convinc'd, we lie under the greatest Obligation of Gratitude, and Acknowledgment, without at the same time employing some thought how we shall acquit our selves in such a manner as shall be grateful and pleasing to the Person to whom we esteem our selves so much oblig'd. This the very Notion of Gratitude, and Acknowledgment it self implies!

THIS being granted (and sure it will be disputed by no reasonable Man) it must I think be as readily admitted; That that way of acting must be most acceptable, and pleasing in such a Case, which God himself shall by some positive Law prescribe. For the very Notion of God implying him to be infinitely Wise, we are very sure no Wise Legislator can be supposed to make any Law that is ungrateful to himself; by the surest Consequence therefore God cannot be suppos'd to do so.

AND now I think we are come to the very quintessence of the Controversie between the Wicked, and Unhappy Men we have to deal with, and us, concerning the Reasonableness of Divine Revelation; and the question (with the utmost deference to better

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ter Judgments.) I humbly Conceive may be thus Stated.

WHETHER it is more reasonable to think that God Almighty himself should personally interpose, so as to fix and set down certain, and positive Laws, for our direction in the particulars how we should act in order to please him in what we call Religion, or paying him Divine Worship; or leave us to Conclude the particulars of this kind from our own Reason, and Understanding Abstracted from such Direction?

IN the Comparison between these two, I cannot but think the greatest Enemy to Revelation will give the Preference to the former. As much as they are apt to Idolize their Reason, they will not sure have the Impudence to Compare it with the Infinite Wisdom of Almighty God? They dare not certainly at most give it the Preference. No! this were not *Deism*, but *Atheism* with a Vengeance.

WELL then, all they have to contend is, the probability of the matter of Fact, whether God has thus interpos'd, or no?

AND this, a distinct Consideration of the Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice of God, will very much help us to discover. And first of his Wisdom.

WHEN it is consider'd this, as well as all the other Perfections of God, is Infinite, it is hard to Conceive how the most exalted degrees of humane Reason, unassisted by its Direction, can be assur'd it is able, in any Choice of particulars in order to the pleasing him, to be in the right. The absurd Determinations
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it has made of this kind hitherto, let the Superstition, and idle vanity which has been every where pitch'd on, speak; and we must from hence be forc'd to own we are at least at some uncertainty, whether we, were we put to the trial, should make a better Choice: Yet this we may be very sure of, that Infinite Wisdom can never be pleas'd with the absurd Services of its Votaries; and therefore one would think it is probable to suppose, for our better, and more sure Direction, God himself should immediately interpose; and should he do so, it immediately Commences what we contend for, a Divine Revelation.

SECONDLY, When it is further consider'd that God is Infinitely Good as well as Wise, it is impossible for us to Reconcile to this Notion of him, the being displeas'd at any absurd Choice the weakness of humane Reason can't help falling into. For he can't but be sensible, by with-holding from us a particular Direction, (which indeed is the only means by which we can be enabled to prevent such a Mischief) we must inevitably incur his displeasure. And as it must be Inconsistent with Infinite Wisdom to suppose it can be pleas'd with Error, and Absurdity: So it is equally Inconsistent with Infinite Goodness, to suppose it can be so displeas'd, when from the weakness of humane Reason alone, it must be unavoidable, from any thing the World has yet shown to the Contrary.

BUT I am sensible the Men we have at present to deal with, tho' they will very readily own their contempt of the Reason of all that have gone before them, entertain a mighty Opinion of their own. Perhaps their Enmity to Revelation, is owing to nothing more, than the thoughts, that by the help
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of their own Reason they are able to do without it. But after all, what have they by the light of their Modern boasted Reason, been able to do more than their Ancestors? Is that Duty of Reverence, Gratitude, and Acknowledgment, which they must own they owe to the Deity, whilst they pretend to believe there is such a thing as a Deity; are these I say better express'd by them, and their Reason, than has been formerly? No certainly. Their fault it is true is not Superstition, but is not Prophaneness, and Scoffing at all Religion as irrational? Can they imagin it more pleasing to God, to laugh both at him, and his Worship, than to entertain foolish, and absurd Notions of them? And yet are not these the Wise Conclusions of our present Mighty Reasoners! How great therefore must be the Goodness of God, and how Strongly must that Goodness stand oblig'd not to leave us to such a Wretched Guide, as these Men in particular make their Reason?

NOR will thirdly the Justice of the Deity less engage him to interpose, for our Direction in the particulars of that Duty, and Worship we owe to him, than his Wisdom, and Goodness.

FOR admitting the Notion of Infinite Wisdom, which sure is one of those Natural Ideas every one must have, who believes there is a God, I say, admitting this, it must be suppos'd the Wickedness, as well as Ignorance of the World in the case before us, is what that is fully appriz'd of. So that were the particular Method of serving the Deity, writ in the Minds of all Mankind in never such legible Characters: Yet the Natural Perverseness of those, whose continual breach of such Laws would make it their Interest to dispute them, would throw the World into

Eternal

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Eternal wrangle, and perplexity in every particular, and it must be impossible in such a Case to distinguish Right from Wrong, or Good from Evil. Do we not daily see, notwithstanding the belief of the most positive Laws to direct us in every particular, what sad Confusion there is on this Account? That there are Wretches, who have the impudence to dispute the Light of the Midday Sun? But had not God Almighty been pleas'd to fix, and settle the Rules of Duty by what we contend a Revelation, the Case were yet more deplorable. The worst, the most profligate Villain we can possibly conceive, were in such a Case, upon the level with the honestest Man upon Earth. For take away the Law, and how is it possible to prove the Transgression? Since, as he will be sure to tell you, where there is no Law, there can be no Transgression. Tell him you Appeal to his Reason, as a Law in the Case, and he'll laugh at you, and impudently tell you his Reason is very easie in the Point; and since his Reason is to be the Judge, as well as yours, what can you say against him; and why may not his Reason take place as well as yours?

THIS is, this must be the sad Consequence of Things where Men are brought to Conclude there is no such Thing as a particular, and Divine Revelation. Humane Nature cannot well sink it self into greater unhappiness, should it study its own Destruction, than by such a Notion. Every tendency this way is Fatal, and the Church of God has in particular felt it so in all Ages. To go no further than the present, do we not see even while a Divine Revelation is at least seemingly believ'd, and admitted a Rule, when any thing else is foisted in its room, what havock it makes? What is there so Monstrously Heretical, and Blasphemous, but under pretence of New Light,
C Reason,

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Reason, Sincerity, and I know not what Modern Delusions, Some Daring, and Nonsensical Wretches will maintain and openly Vindicate? But were we to be wholly depriv'd of the Rule of Divine Revelation, not only the greatest, and most important Principles of Religion, but even those of Common Morality and Honesty would be equally Subjected to disputes of this Nature; and every impudent Fellow, who is resolv'd to be wicked above Controul, would Naturally make it his first Effort, to laugh away the Distinctions of Good and Evil.

COULD we then after all, believe this fine Project of Modern *Deism*, this over-grown boasted Rule of Humane Reason, in the Case before us, Consistent with either the Wisdom or Goodness of God to bear with: Yet sure the Justice, and Purity of his Nature cannot put up with it. He that is of *purser Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, cannot certainly be suppos'd to give Impudence, and Wickedness such a manifest Advantage, when the Revelation of his Will is so easie an Expedient to prevent it; and yet this is what we must suppose, should it be as these Men contend, unreasonable to believe God has ever Revealed himself in a particular manner to Mankind.

To take then what has been offer'd in one view, If we believe there is a God; and that this God is Infinitely Wise, Good, and Just, (and sure it is impossible to believe the one without the other) we must believe he has actually some where given us particular Instructions of what is his Will, further than we can gather from the bare help of our Reason, which is what we mean by a Divine Revelation.

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NOR is the Belief of a Divine Revelation more evident from this easie, and natural Chain of Reasoning, than it is firmly fix'd, and rooted in the Common Sense of all Mankind. Humane Reason under the greatest disadvantages of Ignorance, and Incogitancy, has ever Concluded it in the general, however mistaken in particulars. What * Tully says of a God, may with equal Truth be said of a Divine Revelation: *There is no Nation, however denominatèd, so barbarous, but what has been fully persuaded of it.* That there is a God; That this God ought to be Worshipp'd; and that he himself has given us particular directions how this Worship is to be perform'd, are Principles which in the general the whole World has Naturally agreed to, and Concluded. Hence it is, even amidst the innumerable, and different pretences to the last of these, that there has been no Impostor, or Pretender to Discoveries in Religion so Impudent, as to attempt to usher, what was indeed and in fact only the idle, or wicked Conceptions of his own Brain, into the World, under any less pretence, than that of Divine Direction. *Thus say the Gods, and thus saith the Lord,* is Language we find very frequent among all Pretenders; But *thus say I, or so determines my Reason,* abstracted from such Direction, is a way of expression we find us'd by none. No! the lowest degree of Humane Reason has been able to Conclude this Point so far, that nothing but the Gods, or God they Worshipp'd was sufficient to direct the particulars of that Worship; and therefore no doubt it is that we find in fact the

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World

* *Nulla Gens tam barbara, cui non insideat hæc persuasio; Deus esse; sed nec Scythæ, nec Græci, nec Persæ, nec Hyperboreus dissentiet.*

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World has in no place or time been so senseless to submit to any thing that pretended a less Authority.

I BELIEVE I might safely Challenge the most Sagacious Infidel of our Times, to produce one single Instance from all his mighty reading, either from any Author in History, or whatever else he would fetch his Voucher from, to clash with this one Observation. It seems to be so riveted in the Sense of all Mankind, that wherever the rudest Notions of a God, or Religion, have been entertain'd, the belief of a Divine Revelation has always gone along with them, and been taken for granted. There is not perhaps any one Sentiment can possibly be nam'd, in which the World has been more Unanimous. And however it might quarrel about the several, and different pretensions of this kind: Yet they all agreed to the being of such a thing in the general; and the heat, and eagerness with which such Disputes have been ever carry'd on, proves too they were in earnest while they profess'd such a Belief.

THO' it may not pass very readily with the Wits of the present Age, who seem to be as fond of Novelty in Reason, as they have been of late of new Gospels; to these Gentlemen who measure the soundness of Philosophy only by the Newness of it, what we would observe may be deem'd of very little weight; but with Men of fair, and unbiass'd thought, I believe it will be allow'd, That there cannot be a surer Standard affix'd to Humane Reason (except Divine Revelation it self) than such sentiments of things in the general, which are receiv'd and agreed to by all Mankind. For as it is impossible for us to conceive how such a Concurrence can be to any
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one thing that is absurd in it self, while the being of such a thing as Reason is suppos'd : So it will manifestly appear, upon the strictest Examination of the matter of fact, where such an universal agreement can be prov'd, that it neither is, nor ever was in any Instance, either absurd in it self, so to Conclude, or indeed Immoral.

I WILL not pretend to take upon me Philosophically to discuss, from whence this Common Sense, and Agreement of Ideas proceeds ; whether the Mind or Soul of Man, be what some call a *rasa Tabula* during our Infancy, and so has such Ideas impress'd on it by Observation and Experience ; or whether such Characters, and Notices of things are indeed Coæval to the Soul it self, and are Stamp'd on it immediately at the time of its Creation ? Because as these are Questions that do not at all concern the matter in dispute, Men may Naturally differ about them ; But thus much we are very sure of, that in such Instances wherein all are agreed, the Light is clear, and irresistible. *Nolentes sciunt, fatentur inviti*, says *Tyrius* in a like Case ; such things we must know even against our Wills, there's a sort of fatality in them that forces its way to our Notice. And of this the Notion of a Divine Revelation is one Instance, 'tis evident in the plainest matter of fact. Not only the true Religion we live under the happy Light of, but every false one that has been obtruded on the World, since its first Creation, is a Proof of it, and 'tis opposing the Common, and Establish'd Sense of all Mankind to dispute it.

WHERE then is the Reason of those Men who deny the Rationality of the thing in general ? Do they believe a God ? They must then believe his Attributes,

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tributes, that he is Wise, Good, and Just. Do they believe there is such a thing as Reason? They must then believe, what all Mankind agrees in, is Reasonable. Upon the whole therefore it must appear even from this mean Essay, if we consider the Nature of God, and that Consequent Sense of it, its Beauty, and Excellence must raise in our Breasts; if we consider further how particularly we of humane race are distinguish'd by him, and the consequent Duty only of Gratitude we owe him on that Account; the weakness and exceeding deficiency of Humane Reason how unequal it is to direct us properly to express this Duty of Gratitude; The Wickedness, and Perverseness our experience shows it subjected to in such a Disquisition, with the Consequent Obligation; therefore God Almighty lies under, by Virtue of his Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Purity, particularly to direct us how to please him: And Lastly, if we add to this, the concurrent persuasion of all Mankind, that so he has in fact directed us: We must Conclude the truth of what we first Observ'd, viz. That the very Notion or belief of a God necessarily infers, or implies a Revelation of his Will.

WERE we to stop here, the unreasonableness of *Deism*, or the belief of a God, and not of a Divine Revelation, were sufficiently plain; but as the absurdity rises and is abundantly aggravated, now we are under the Light of the Gospel, and the very thought is not only Stupid and Sottish, but Impious and Wicked, proceed we now to what was observ'd in the second place, viz. That the particular Attestations God has given us of the Matter of Fact, viz. A Revelation of his Will, leave a Rational Man no possibility of doubting that he has reveal'd himself to us,

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IN those times, when that Life and Immortality which were brought to Light by the Gospel, were conceal'd in only dark hints, and the Greatest, and Wisest Heads were perplex'd in *Labyrinth*, and Obscurity ;

*Quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
Est iter in sylvis. —*

So weak were the greatest Degrees of Humane Reason unassisted by Revelation ; how certain soever of the thing in the general, still confus'd, and in doubt about particulars, sure of such a thing as a Revelation, but knew not where to find it. *Immortalitatem animæ* Pythagoras *somniavit*, Democritus *non credidit*, *in consolationem damnationis suæ* Socrates *in carcere disputavit*, says St. Hierome. When such was the Case, tho' the denial of such a thing as Divine Revelation, would, as we have seen, even then not bear the Test of Strict Reasoning ; yet something amidst so much perplexity might have been pleaded in its favour. But now to do this ! At this time ! when we are surrounded with such glaring Light from all sides : When the Testimony, the Experience of Seventeen hundred Years, our Education, every thing one would think, that could force the Mind to Conviction, stares us in the Face ; it is enough to tempt one to think, this is to be an Age only Remarkable for Monsters. Amidst the hurry and vexation of repeated Disappointments in the search, the Traveller may in a fret despair of ever finding his way ; but when it is plainly pointed out to him by the most Competent Director, none would pity his being benighted ; if he sullenly declines pursuing his Journey. But much more were his Madness and Folly aggravated, if under the Notion of

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Wit, and Superior penetration, he should laugh away his own Eye-sight, and merrily tell the World it is Dark, when the Meridian Sun shines in his Face.

YET such is the unexampl'd Madness, and Folly of our present Times. After our Holy Religion has for repeated Ages baffled all the Arts, and Malice of an Infidel World, and come off *more than Conqueror* through the Strength, and Power of its Leader; in this Age it finds it self attack'd by Vipers bred in its own Bosom; and Infidelity alone is not a Grasp of Wickedness big enough for the present Generation, without Apostacy to bear it Company. Too narrowly to enquire into the first Springs and Causes of this sad face of Things, may perhaps be as Melancholly, as the effects we groan under; and indeed when devouring Flames have seiz'd our Houses, the most Important question is not how they came, but where shall Water be got, and what shall be done to prevent their Progress, and thereby our own Consequent Destruction? To render then these Papers as useful as we can, it must be their Chief Business to look back on the first Evidences of our holy Faith; and tho' this may not have any great effect on those who are so bold and impious at this Time to deny it: Yet as it always has, so it ever will abundantly Arm all honest Minds, against such People, and their impious, and detestable Tenets. Men that are abandon'd by Common Modesty and Ingenuity, are very little to be mov'd by the most powerful force of Reason and Argument; and a very little Observation will discover such to us the wretches we are at present to Encounter; but those who may possibly be infected by the Poyson they spread, cannot too carefully be guarded against it.

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It is not that I have the Vanity to think, any thing I am able to offer, will in any Degree come up to what has been repeatedly done in this kind by several of our excellent Divines: But Books of this Nature being mostly Closeted in the Studies of the Learned, and so not so much Subjected to the common Notice, as something of a fresh Publication; and the Assiduity of our Adversaries being such, as to reach the remotest Corners; All Hands seem call'd, at least to endeavour the Rescue of our holy Faith; and therefore I hope the good Intention of the present Undertaking, will in some measure atone for the Defects the Judicious will readily perceive in it.

IN order then to laying the Evidence we have of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, being what we Assert, and believe it to be, *a Revelation of the Will of God*, in as easy a view as the Compass of these Papers will admit; it may not be improper to consider distinctly these four Things, *viz.*

I. *First*, THE Testimony of the antient Prophets.

II. *Secondly*, THE Miracles that were done by our Lord and Saviour, in Confirmation of his Mission.

III. *Thirdly*, THE Nature and Perfection of the Doctrine of the Gospel in itself. And,

IV. *Lastly*, THE Success of it in the Event to this Time, both as it has shew'd the Divine Power that always Accompany'd it, and the Completion of some particular Prophecies contain'd therein.

FIRST

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FIRST then let us consider the Testimony of the antient Prophets.

IN this sort of Testimony two Things. deserve our particular Remark. First, the Nature of the Evidence it self; as it is void of all possibility of Fraud and Collusion. When Men live together in the same Period of Time, it is easie to imagine such Measures may be Concerted by them, as may Cause an exact Concurrence among them: But when, as in the Case of Prophecy, Things are foretold many Ages before the Event is propos'd, to make the Prediction good, the exact Agreement of the Event to the Prediction, cannot possibly be owing to any Thing of this kind; because Persons who live in distant Ages have no Opportunity of that Correspondence, as is necessary to the forming any Design, or Imposture to deceive the World. Neither can there be any Interest to be serv'd by an Attempt of this Nature. For the Reputation of a Prophet wholly resting on the Event of his Prediction: When he places it for many Ages after the possible Compass of his own Life, no Benefit or Honour can in the least redound to him, be the Prediction never so true; consequently nothing but the divine Agency that moves him to such, or such Declarations with regard to future Events, can determine him to any thing of that Nature. The notion of being Celebrated for a true Prophet, a Thousand, or two Thousand Years after his Decease, carries in it very little Temptation to any Man, who has only this World in his View: And yet this is all the utmost stretch of Imagination can form to induce any Prophet (without the Supposition of Divine impulse) to make Predictions of such distant Events.

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Events. Consequently wherever any Prediction is made of this kind, it is irrational to conclude it to flow from any thing else but Divine Inspiration, and as such the utmost deference ought to be paid to what it delivers.

THE second Thing I would remark with regard to the Testimony of Propheſie, is the peculiar Evidence it gives for the Chriſtian Faith, even excluſive of the ſame, to the Law of *Moses* himſelf. For tho' it muſt be confeſs'd, ſeveral of the Predictions of the antient Prophets, were manifeſtly deſign'd for the Confirmation of the Law of *Moses* after it was made, and Promulg'd: Yet I do not remember in all the holy Writings, an Inſtance of any Prophets either foretelling of the Appearance of *Moses*, or any thing of the Nature and Purport of the Law he was to ſettle and fix among them. But in the Caſe of our bleſſed Saviour, and the Law he was to give us, their Accounts are exceeding Copious, even for thouſands of Years, before either he, or the Law he was to give us, appear'd to the World. No Prophet, how diſtant ſoever from the Time of his coming, but bore his Teſtimony this way; and there is little elſe in all their Writings and Predictions, but what ſome way or other bears relation both to him, and the Law he was to deliver. To enter into the Particulars of Proof in this Point, were little leſs than enumerating all their Predictions, and nothing but the moſt ſtupid Ignorance of them can render it needful. The inference we would draw from this is, that tho' the Law of *Moses* is Confeſſedly of the ſame Divine Original with the Goſpel of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; yet the Goſpel in the particular Teſtimony of Propheſie has abundantly the Preheminence, in being ſo amply foretold, both
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with respect to the *Legislator*, and the *Law* it self.

T H I S Premis'd, proceed we now to the Particulars of the Evidence thus given by the Antient Prophets, from which we conclude the Truth of that Faith, which as Christians we are bound to Contend for.

A N D this we shall endeavour to do under these five distinct Views, viz.

First, As it relates to our Saviour's Birth. *Secondly*, His Life. *Thirdly*, His Doctrines. *Fourthly*, His Death. And *lastly*, His Resurrection and Ascension, and sending the holy Spirit, for the Confirmation of the Whole.

F I R S T, then as to his Birth.

F O R the Time when it should commence, 'tis in general declar'd to be before the *Sceptre*, or in other Words the * Power of exercising Civil Authority in the execution of their own proper Laws, *should de-*
part

* **S O M E** of the Modern *Jews* will have the Word *SCEP-*
TRE here to be wrong; for the Word in the Original they tell us, signifies a *Rod*, as well as a *Sceptre*, and so the meaning is they should be an afflicted People till the Coming of the *Messiah* to deliver them. How wild this Sense is, the Words themselves will show, and how justly soever they deserve the *R O D*, it is certain their Antient Writers neither so expected, nor explain'd the Passage to be so fulfill'd; tho' 'tis to be fear'd 'twill literally hold true in their Case, and the *Rod* will be held over their Backs 'till the *Messiah* will at last come with a *Rod of Iron* to punish their incorrigible Obstinacy, and Infidelity.

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part from *Juda*, or the People of the † *Jews*. Thus *Jacob*, *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah*, nor a *Law-giver from between his Feet*, *Gen. xlix.* until *Shiloh* come. If we consider the particular Character of the Prophet here speaking, we find him no less than the Father of the whole Nation of the *Jews*, and all of them ever after taking their Name from him, and therefore calling themselves the *Children of Israel*. 10.

IF the Time when the Prophecie was made, a very little Chronology will inform us, it was above a Thousand Years before the Coming of our Saviour, in whom we insist it to be fulfill'd. So far out of the reach of Possibility of Fraud in the imputing of it to the Person here mention'd, that the very *Jews* themselves, our Saviour's greatest Enemies, allow them to be his Words, and from thence not only formerly, but even to this Day form some Expectation of the *SHILOH* here promis'd. The only thing then that lies upon us Christians, is to Consider how far this Prophecy can be said to be made Good by our Saviour.

IN order to this, two Questions arise from the Text, 1. Whether the Sceptre, or Law of the *Jews* was in being, when our Saviour was born; 2. Whether (as the Text seems to intimate) they at any Time ceas'd after it.

IF we view them with regard to the first Term of the Text, the *Sceptre*, we find this indeed in a Remarkable

† THE whole People of *Jews* denominated of *Judah*, because that Tribe was to remain 'till the Destruction of the whole People.

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markable decline, plac'd by *Anthony* and *Augustus Caesar* in the hands of *Herod* (as was observ'd by *Antigenus* his Competitor) * *An Idumean and private Man, that is to say, but half a Jew, a Practice directly against the Law, and right of Succession that was Customary among them.* However during the Life of *Hyrchanus* their then High-Priest, and this *Herod*, and *Archelaus* his Son, the *Romans* still suffer'd the *Jews* to be rul'd by their own Laws, and Governours, 'till they were made by *Augustus* a Part of the Province of *Syria*, after he had Banish'd *Archelaus*, in that part over which he presided, as an *Ethnarch*. † And upon the whole, whatever where the Graples, and Difficulties they were continually put to for the keeping their own particular Polity, and Government, it is evident they were not totally depriv'd of them, 'till in the Language of the Prophet *Daniel*, the *Prince that was to come* should destroy the City, and Sanctuary; and the end thereof should be with a Flood, even 'till the Consummation should be pour'd upon the Desolate; and what the Prophet *Jeremy* often calls their whole Destruction, should come.

'Tis plain then in answer to the first Question, that so far the *Sceptre* and Law of the *Jews* was not departed from them, as to amount to a total deprivation at our Saviour's Birth: Consequently so much of the Prediction was made Good, and thoroughly fulfill'd by it.

THE Second Question, as it regards what is intimated should afterwards happen, the dire subversion of their

* *Josephus* Antiq. lib. 14. c. xxvii.

† Vid. Bp. *Pearson* on the Article, He suffer'd under *Pontius Pilate*. Also *Josephus*. lib. 17. c. xv.

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their whole Polity, and indeed every thing else that could denominate them a People, their ever since Vagrant and sad Condition are too evident proofs of, to need to be expatiated on; and as we shall have a properer opportunity hereafter when we come to particulars, we shall wave any further Observations of that kind till then.

THE next thing we would observe in the Testimony of the Antient Prophets concerning the *Shiloh* mention'd, and so Constantly expected, and depended on by the *Jews*, is the place where he was to be Born. And this we are expressly told was to be *Bethlehem*. Thus the Prophet *Micah*, *But thou Bethlehem * Ephratah, though thou be little among the Thousands of Judah, yet out of Mic. v. 2. thee shall he come forth, that is to be Ruler*

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* THEY that imagine any difficulty arising from the difference of the Words as here taken from the Prophet, and those quoted by those who made *Herod* the Answer concerning the Place of our Saviours Nativity, are to Consider the Alteration in the Word *Ephratah*, unto, *in the Land of Judah*, (as express'd by the *Evangelist* St. *Matthew*) not so much a literal Quotation of the Words of the Prophet, as giving the main end and intent of them, for the Word *Ephratah* bearing Relation only to a private Woman very well known at the time when the Prophet spoke these Words, tho' very improbable to have struck the Notice of *Herod* to whom the Answer was made: Or admitting it yet to bear a more Antient Relation, as we find it the Sir-name of *Bethlehem*, as may be seen *Gen. 35. 19.* and *Ruth. 5. 11.* Yet as it would have been altogether unintelligible to *Herod*, so to have quoted it, it is easie to conceive their variation in the Point was only to give the Intent and Meaning of the Prophet in Words more familiar, and better apprehended by him: A Liberty not only taken by them in this Important Passage, but very often us'd by the Apostles themselves on the like Occasion.

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in Israel : Whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting. Words so well known, and receiv'd by the *Jews* as relating to the place of the *Messiah's* Nativity, that when their Chief Priests were assembled together in order to resolve *Herod* where he was to be Born in the Account of the Prophets, they immediately resolve without any Hesitation, it was to be at *Bethlehem*. Nay, even since the Birth of our Lord has fulfill'd this Prophecy, they have not thought fit to reject the sacred Text, but still like some of their Predecessors endeavour to evade the force of it, by calling him a *Nazarene*; which to the Confusion of their Malice verifies another Prophecy, which expressly says, *he should be call'd a Nazarene*. There needs nothing to be offer'd in proof of the fulfilling this Prophecy in the Person of our Saviour, but the Account of the Gospel itself, where the matter of Fact is laid down in such a full and unexceptionable manner, that it were really to trifle to attempt to add any thing else.

IN his Family, he was said to be in general of the *Seed of Abraham*. Thus God himself expressly promis'd him : *In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be Blessed*; with many more Passages to the same effect. More particularly afterwards he is declar'd to be the Son of *David*. Thus the Prophet *Jeremy*, *Behold the Days come saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch*. And so familiar was the Notion on the Account of this, and many other such Prophecies, that the meanest, and least discerning among the *Jews* always readily deem'd their *Messiah* to be the Son of *David*.

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THE Proof of the Matter of Fact in its particular Application to our Saviour, needs nothing but our perusal of the first of *St. Matthew*, or third of *St. Luke*; where his Genealogy both from *Abraham* and *David*, is so exactly trac'd, as to leave no Room for Dispute.

THEY that shall observe *St. Matthew* only gives us the Generation of *Joseph* his suppos'd Father, and not of *Mary* from whom alone he proceeded, will find themselves equally satisfied with respect to her Family by *St. Luke*, as she was the Daughter of *Eli*. Take it more particularly in *Dr. South's Words*.
“ The Royal Line of *David*, by *Solomon* (says he)
“ being extinct in *Jeconiah*, the Crown, and
“ Kingdom pass'd immediately into the Younger
“ Line of *Nathan*, another Son of *David*, in *Salathiel*,
“ and *Zorobabel*; which *Zorobabel* having two Sons,
“ *Abiud*, and *Rhesa*, the Royal Dignity of Right De-
“ scended upon *Abiud*, of which *Joseph* was the Last;
“ who Marrying of the Virgin *Mary*, sprung from the
“ Line of *Rhesa*, the Younger Son of *Zorobabel*, and
“ withal having no Issue himself, his Right passeth in-
“ to the Line of *Mary*, being next of Kin, and by
“ that Means upon *Jesus* her Son. Whereupon he
“ was both Naturally the Son of *David*, and Legal-
“ ly the King of the *Jews*; which latter is Ac-
“ counted to us by *St. Matthew*, and the former by
“ *St. Luke*; who delivers down to us the Pedigree of
“ *Mary* the Mother of *Jesus*, and Daughter of
“ *Eli*; tho' *Joseph* her Husband only stands there
“ Nam'd, according to the known way of the *Jews*
“ Computing their Genealogies.”

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“ *Dr. South's Sermon on Rev. xxii. 16.*

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THE Last Thing we shall observe as declar'd by the Prophets concerning our Saviour's Birth, is his being to be Born of a Virgin. This may in some Measure be Collected from that early Prophecy about him: *The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpents Head.* But more particularly by the *Jer. xxxi. 22.* Prophet *Jeremy, The Lord hath Created a new Thing in the Earth, a Woman shall compass a Man.* The Wretched endeavours of the *Jews*, in Contradiction to their Antient Rabbins, to force this Passage to signifie any thing rather than enclosing by Conception, speaks only that hardness of heart, and irreclaimable Obstinacy for which they have been always notorious. For as every other Sense they would put upon it, contradicts the very Terms of the Text, and makes no such Thing, as what is call'd *Creating a new Thing*: So the Pomp, and Solemnity of the Prophet can Amount to nothing less, than something very Extraordinary, and out of the Common Course of Nature. But whatever Ambiguity may be suppos'd to be Couch'd in this Prophet's Expression, what the Prophet *Isaiah*, who spake by the same Divine Spirit, says, *Isa. vii. 14.* leaves no room for Scruple. *Behold, says he, a Virgin shall Conceive, and bear a Son.* Nor will all their shifts either about the Term **Virgin*, or their suppos'd

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* THE *Jews* in the first Ages of the Gospel, in order to evade this Prophecy, deny'd that the Prophet spake of a *Virgin* at all; but to this it was answer'd, that so the Seventy themselves Interpreted the Words, who were themselves *Jews*, and liv'd long before our Saviour's Time. They further observ'd it could not relate to the *Messiah*, because his Name was not

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† Completion of it in other Persons, show any thing but the Weakness, and Malice of their baffled Cause.

THE Nature of the Matter of Fact it self, as it was undoubtedly fulfill'd in our Blessed Lord, being one of the Mysteries of our holy Religion, can in the Reason of the thing admit of no other proof than what must be fetch'd only from the Gospel, from whence alone we are inform'd of it. An occurrence in which the particular Person concern'd was only an obscure, and private Young Woman, cannot be suppos'd to reach the Notice of any Publick History, that was not immediately employ'd for that purpose, and therefore nothing of that kind can be suppos'd to be advanc'd in its favour. But that such an extraordinary and supernatural Occurrence was some time to come to pass; the veracity of those Prophets we have mention'd stands liable to answer for; and the Authentickness, and Divinity of their

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Predictions

to be *Emanuel*; neither was our Saviour himself any other ways known by that Name, than as his Divine Nature, afterwards reveal'd, made it applicable to him.

† It being Completed in the Person of *Hezekias* (their other refuge) could not be neither, because he was both conceiv'd, and born before the Sign here mention'd could be given. *Abaz*, in whose time the Prophecy was made, Reigning but sixteen Years, as appears by the sacred Canon, and *Hezekias* being twenty-five Years Old when he began to Reign, 2 *King*. xvi. 2. 2 *King*. xviii. 2. Only therefore the Gospel account can carry in it the full Completion of this great and astonishing Prediction, and Undeniably just is the Conclusion of the holy *Evangelist* when he tells us, *All this was done that it might be fulfill'd which was spoken by the Prophet saying, Behold a Virgin, &c. Mat. i. 23.*

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Predictions, the *Jews* themselves have not been so hardy as to deny, whatever Temptation the Passages referr'd to may have given them.

BUT this however we are able to advance from the Nature of the thing, in the account given of it by the Gospel it self: That it is very probable the matter of Fact there related is true, because there is one Circumstance at least in the Evidence given us, that no rational Man can think like to deceive us. And this presents it self to us in the Person betroth'd to the *Virgin*. Jealousie we all know is the Rage of a Man; and as there is nothing makes him more Naturally Sagacious, and exceedingly Nice in his Scrutiny: So when there seems to be Reason to give Birth to it, little evasions will not make it easie. There is not any one Property of which Humane Nature is more tenacious, than that of the Bed, and where it is but so much as imagin'd to be violated, what sad Confusion always follows, no History but affords us abundant proof. In the Case before us we have a *Virgin* Espous'd under such Circumstances, that the most study'd good Nature and Candour of her Husband could not excuse; he is resolv'd indeed not to prosecute, but he is not insensible of the seeming wrong. Now to find a Man under these irresistible prejudices appeas'd, and afterwards take care of the holy Maid; To find all his resentment hush'd, and end in Love and Good Offices, cannot sure Rationally be imputed to any thing less than that Divine Vision the Gospel gives us the History of in the Case of *Joseph*.

THE Matter of Fact in it self is so very extraordinary, that no Mortal evidence could be suppos'd to be Credited, and all the World must allow in such

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a tender Point, nothing less than an Angel could be believ'd.

VIEW then here the infinite, and astonishing Wisdom of God in giving the evidence of this great, and Aweful Mystery of our Salvation. Not only the Testimony of the Holy Prophets, the Purity, and Spotless Innocence of the *Virgin*, but the Voice of an Angel was needful here. *Joseph, thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy Wife: For that which is conceiv'd in her, is of the Holy Ghost.* A Reason which as it was in its Nature abundantly equal to his satisfaction: So with Reverence we may venture to observe, nothing less could have been suppos'd to have done it.

PASS we from the Account given by the Antient Prophets of the Birth of the *Messiah*, to what we next propos'd to consider, his Life; and we find it, notwithstanding the different Expectations of the *Jews* in general, declar'd to be a Life of *Sorrow*. The exceeding prejudice the *Jews* have against this Notion of their promis'd *Messiah*, and the pompous Ideas they had of his being to be a mighty Temporal Prince, and subduer of all their Enemies, one would think were so carefully, and particularly anticipated by several of the Prophets, that his appearing under a Contrary Character should not be at all Surprizing. How does the Prophet *Isaiah* enter into the Minuteft Circumstances of this Part of his Character. He (says the Prophet) *has no Form nor Comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no Beauty that we should desire him. He is despised, and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief; we hid as it were our Faces from him; he was despised, and we esteem'd him not.* And

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again,

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again, *He was oppressed, he was afflicted. He was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, taken from Prison, and from Judgment; It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to Grief.* To bring this Prophecy down to the History of the Gospel; what indeed was the whole Life of the Blessed Jesus, but one continu'd Completion of it? *The Foxes had holes, and the Birds of the Air had Nests, but he had not where to lay his head.* No sooner is he born, but his Infant Life is pursu'd by a Merciless Tyrant, and the advice of an Angel preserves him from Destruction. *Judea* is made on his account, a sad scene of Infant Blood and Slaughter, and *Egypt* only puts him out of reach of his persecutors Rage. In the after Progress of his Life, incessantly assaulted by wicked and malicious Men who hunted for his Destruction. Blacken'd at one time with Calumnies and Slander, reproach'd as a *Wine-Bibber* and *Friend to Publicans and Sinners*, at another, term'd a Sorcerer, and dealer with evil Spirits, nay is charg'd with being assisted by Beelzebub the chief of them. Nothing that either Malice or Art could invent, was omitted to embitter his Life, and as his Death was the most Cruel and Tormenting the Country he liv'd in could inflict; so all the parts of his Life that preceded it, could be said to be little less than one repeated Act of Crucifixion. If Art and Subtilty, if Malice and Revenge, if Power, and Oppression, if Perfidy and Treachery; if all these united must needs hang heavy on Life, and speak him against whom they are employ'd a Man of Sorrows: Surely the Blessed Jesus was so in the highest degree. Never were all these Powers of Darkness so firmly knit, and cemented together, as in his Case, and Consequently never was any Sorrow like his Sorrow.

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THE little opposition this part of our Blessed Lord's Character meets with, both with respect to the Prophecy, and History, renders it needless at all to stop the Course of these Papers in its examination.

THE ridiculous Evasion of the *Jews*, in supposing two *Messiah's*, a *Suffering*, and a *Triumphant one*, as it is abundantly clear'd by the Christian *Hypothesis* of the Second Epiphany, or Appearance of our Lord to Judge the World: So it only shows what wretched shifts they are put to, to get rid of the force of this Prophecy. Needless it is to enumerate the Testimony of several of the other Prophets to prove, that the being a Man of Sorrows, was to be a part of the *Messiah's* Character, because the thing it self is admitted, and only this thin Subterfuge us'd to elude its force. But as there is another part of our Saviour's Life mention'd by the same Prophet *Isaiab*, which is in its Nature so very extraordinary, that it is alone peculiar to him, the reflection on it cannot be unuseful; and that is, that his Life was to be entirely innocent and spotless.

THE peculiarity of such a Life, Humane Frailty alone will prove. That there is none Good, no not one, not only the holy Book, but the experience of all Mankind assures us. *All we* (says the Prophet) *like Sheep have gone astray, we have turn'd every one to his own way, but the Lord would lay on him the iniquity of us all. He had done no Violence, neither was any deceit in his Mouth. He was wounded for our Transgressions, He was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are heal'd.* vid. the same Chapter of *Isaiab*.

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THIS is the Character the Prophet gives of the Life of the *Messiah*. A Character which as it could only be made Good by him, *in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead Bodily*; So it is repeatedly insisted in the Gospel to be Completed in the Person of our Saviour. He knew no Sin, neither was Guile

found in his Mouth, says St. Peter. *Joh. viii. 46. Which of you convinceth me of Sin?* Was

the Challenge of our Lord himself to his greatest Enemies. The answer to this would have been sure in the mention of some slip of his Life, could the utmost searches of their Malice have furnish'd them with any thing of that kind. But so far were they from this, that they were able to think of nothing but that which has been the common refuge of all his Enemies ever since as well as then, *viz.* That he was a Magician, and acted by an evil Spirit. Say we not

well, say they, *that thou art a Samaritan and hast a Devil?* Poor refuge of baffled Malice! had they nothing Personal and from their own Knowledge to Charge him with? Had he wrong'd none? deceiv'd none? Was he so perfect after so bold, and open a Challenge, as to fetch from them nothing but a bare conjecture? They durst not be full and peremptory even in the Charge they would make: Say we not well? No certainly, very far from it. A Life so Spotless as he liv'd; Doctrines so Pure and Holy, which he taught, and Actions so Good and Kind to all about him, could not proceed from an evil Spirit.

AND yet this was all even the invention of Malice it self could suggest, when it had so fair, such an unguarded advantage to have shown it self. Nor were the after Enemies of our Blessed Lord, and his Religion

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Religion better provided in this Point. Not *Celsus*, nor *Porphyry*, nor *Julian*, could ever say more. Wretches that fear to speak no Blasphemies against our Lord and his Doctrines; but yet even their Malice, and all their Labour and Diligence, amounted to no more than this one single Charge, that he was a Magician. *Celsus* the first of these liv'd in the second, *Porphyry* in the third, and *Julian* in the fourth Century after our Lord. Time enough certainly for some things else to have been rak'd together, by a very little industry, to have cast a slur upon the brightest Character; Especially when in the Case of one of these, Christianity had not only open, and ingenious Infidelity, but Apostacy to struggle with. * 'Tis true, by the Commendable Piety, and Zeal of *Theodosius* the Emperor, the Works of these bold Wretches were Collected, and justly Committed to the Flames, tho' *Porphyry* is said to have Written fifteen Tomes: But a great many Remains, and Fragments of them, are to be found occasionally interspers'd in the Writings of the Antient † *Apologists* for the Christian Religion: And as the Charge of our Lord's being a Magician is frequently to be found, it must certainly seem very strange no other Imputation should be mention'd, if any other had been made.

THE Life of our Lord was very far from the *Ascetick*. He never courted Retirement, the Witnesses of his Conduct were thousands, and the Fame of his Actions reach'd not only over all *Judea*, but the Regions round about. Nothing that he did was
done

* Vid. *Origen* against *Celsus*, *St. Cyril* of *Alexandria* against † *Julian*; and *Eusebius*, and *St. Hierome* *prefatione ad lib. 1. Comment. in Epist. ad Galatas* against *Porphyry*.

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done in a Corner, but equally subjected to the nicest inspection of Enemies, as well as Friends. This sure must be judg'd unlike the Management of an Impostor, which must always be carry'd on by secret, and private intrigue. If therefore any thing was amiss in his Conduct 'twas easily known, and there wanted not enough to have blaz'd it abroad. As to what was said against him, the Gospel it self gives us an account of it, and all the Wit, and Malice of his Enemies, have not been able to add one tittle to the Charge. What Villany, and Subornation were us'd at his Tryal? and yet what did all they could rake together amount to more, than a Mistake of his Sense, which was afterwards fully explain'd by the Glory, and Triumph of his Resurrection? so spotless did his Character appear, that even the Judge himself pronounc'd him Innocent, and when he repeatedly demanded why, What evil has he done? could fetch no other Answer, than Tumult and Noise, and, let him be Crucify'd.

FAR be it from me to endeavour to establish the Character of our Lord from any other than that which is the true History of it, the Gospel; but yet it may be observ'd, that others who wrote the History of the Time in which he liv'd, have not attempted so much as to say any thing against it. I insist not on *Josephus's* calling him a **Wise Man, and Teacher of the Truth*, (which in those times were always the *Epithets* apply'd to a Good Man) because should I admit, as the *Jews* at this time would represent, these Words were interpolated by some Christian, yet his giving us so particular, and bad a Character of

* Vid. *Josephus Antiq. lib. 18. cap. iv.*

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of several (a) Impostors, who set up much about the same time, under the same Character of the *Messiah*, and saying nothing of him, must sure be very remarkable. His giving too so large an Encomium of St. (b) *John Baptist*, and (c) *St. James the Apostle*, (which all allow to be genuine) two such known Partizans

(a) Vid. *lib.* 17. cap. xii. also *lib.* 18. cap. v. with several other. (b) In the Character he gives St. *John Baptist*, his Words are these. "Now the generality of the *Jews* were of Opinion that this was only a just Judgment of God upon *Herod*, and his Army, for the Business of *John*, Sir-named the BAPTIST, which excellent Man this *Tetrarch* Murder'd. And what was his Crime? but only his exhorting the *Jews* to the Love, and Practice of Virtue; and in the first place of Piety, and Justice, and to a Regeneration by Baptism, and new Life, and not by abstaining from this, or that particular Sin, but by an habitual purity of mind, as well as of Body. Now so great was the Credit and the Authority of this holy Man, as appear'd by the Multitude of his Disciples, and the Veneration they had for his Doctrine, (For he could do what he would with them) that *Herod* did not know how far the Reputation of a Man of his Spirit might influence the People towards a Revolt. So that for fear of the worst, he chose rather to take him out of the way in Time, before any hurt was done, than to put it to the hazard of an unprofitable Repentance when it would be too late. Wherefore he sent him away bound to *Macbarus*, with Order to have him put to Death, which was executed; and that impious Fact was follow'd with a Divine Vengeance upon *Herod*, for the Blood of that Just Man, as the *Jews* reasonably enough persuaded themselves. *Antiq. lib.* 18. cap. vii. (c) His Account of the Death of St. *James the Apostle* is this. *Ananias* (the high Priest says he) was Naturally fierce, and hardy: by Sect a *Sadducee*, the most Censorious, and Uncharitable sort of People upon the Face of the Earth. This being his way and opinion, he took his opportunity in the interval betwixt the Death of *Festus*, and

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tizans of our Lord, and not so much as glancing at their Error in believing in him, is what they will find very hard to Account for, and must I think at least prove him unable to say any thing against them on that Account. It cannot sure be so much as suspected *Iosephus* could any ways be byas'd in favour of our Saviour, his being a profess'd *Jew*, and throughout his History so Solicitous for the Credit both of his Profession and Country, abundantly Crushing such a thought, and his afterwards flattering *Vespasian* with the Title of the *Messiah*, shows how very little inclination he had to speak any thing in his Favour. But be that as it will thus much is very certain, had there been any fault to have been charg'd on our Saviour's Life, we must Conclude we should have hear'd of it from him, the Nature of his History, as well as Profession so naturally leading him thereto. But how far from this he was even when he had the properest
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and the Arrival of his Successor *Albinus*, to call a Council together with the Assistance of the Judges; and to Cite *James* the Brother of *Iesus*, which was called Christ, with some others, to appear before them, and Answer to a Charge of Blasphemy, and Breach of Law; whereupon they were Condemn'd, and deliver'd up to be Ston'd. This was so surprizing a way of proceeding to all the Honest and Conscientious part of the City, that they presently sent the King private Notice of it, as a thing very ill done, with a Request that *Ananias* might have a Check for it, and a Caution never to do any such thing for the future. Others were sent with an Account of it to *Albinus*, who was upon his Journey to *Alexandria*, representing it as an Usurpation, and Encroachment upon his Authority; for without his Consent it ought not to have been done. *Albinus* took this so heinously, that he wrote an Angry Menacing Letter to the high Priest upon it, and King *Agrippa* at the end of three Months removed him from the high Priesthood, and gave it to *Iesus* the Son of *Damneus*. *Antiq. lib. 20. cap. viii.*

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Opportunity, the Accounts in the Margin will convince every reasonable Man.

THUS much may be sufficient in the Account of our Saviour's Life in general ; in the particulars we shall have further Occasion to enlarge on this Argument. Certain it is, as it was foretold by the Antient Prophets, that he was to be the Holy One, perfectly pure, and spotless in his Life, so nothing that the utmost Wit and Malice of his Enemies could ever yet charge upon him, could ever fix one Blemish upon it. Proceed we now to the Third View which we propos'd to consider the Account of the Antient Prophets in, and that is his Doctrines.

OF these, among many other, two Things deserve our Remark in the Account of the Antient Prophets. First his reducing the Divine Texts to their Original Purity and Design ; and Secondly, his extending the use and influence of them, not only to the *Jews*, but the whole Race of Mankind.

THE first of these we have in general promis'd in a Prophetical Manner of the *Messiah*, by *Moses*. *The Lord thy God (says he) will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me ; unto him ye shall hear- Deut. xviii. ken, and again, I will put my Words into his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command.* More plainly afterwards by the Prophet *Isaiah* it is declar'd the Glory of the Lord should be Revealed, and the Spirit chap. xl. 5, of God should be upon him, and he should chap. xlii. 1. bring forth Judgment. And yet still more particularly by the Prophet *Malachi*, who tells
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us, he should sit like a Refiner, and a Purifier of Silver, and should Purify the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an Offering in Righteousness.

THE genuineness of these Prophecies is not in the least disputed by any of the Enemies of Christianity, and their particular Application to the *Messiah*, the General expectation was always form'd of his being to be such an extraordinary Teacher and Reformer puts out of the reach of Contest. That all the Difficulties and Obscurities of the Divine Writings were to be made clear, and perspicuous at the appearance of the *Messiah*, is a Notion the *Jews* no doubt still entertain. The Prophets are every where so full and plain in this Point, that 'tis impossible to read them, and not think so.

NOR is this Character of the *Messiah* more evidently foretold by the Prophets, than it was fully made good in the Person of our Lord. Almost every thing he said is a standing Monument in proof of this; but his Sermon on the Mount abounds with so many particular Instances of this part of his Character, that a short review of it cannot be unuseful.

VIEW we him then in his own Expressions, and we find him declare in the fullest Terms the intent of his Appearing among us. *Think not* says he, *that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, 'till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one Tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, 'till all be fulfilled. I come not like your present Doctors,*
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and Teachers, to corrupt and estrange the Sense of the sacred Text from its original meaning and purpose, but to purge, and purifie it from their false Glosses, and to give you the true, and genuine import, and design of the Legislator. *For I say unto you, except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* By which in the plainest manner we are taught, that we shall come exceeding short in either the Sense, or practice of our Duty, if we take it from the general and loose Comments which did then prevail, and were inculcated with an Air of mighty Authority. As in the Instance of Murder immediately after propos'd by our Lord: *You have heard says he, that it has been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you, &c.* And the like of Adultery, and other breaches of the Decalogue.

IN which proceeding of our Lord, as the Texts alluded to are fully rescu'd from the partial, and narrow Sense of the Teachers then in Vogue, who iudustriously apply'd them only to external Actions: So they are extended by him to that exact Perfection and Purity, and clear'd with such a particular Force and Authority, as never was evidenc'd by any other Prophet before him. Not that it is insisted but that several of the Antient Prophets in their Comments on the Law, largely complain'd of that narrow Notion of the Sense of it which had obtain'd in their Times, and are pretty frequent in their enforcements of the Language of the heart, and sincerity of the mind, as well as in the external Acts of Obedience to the bare Letter of it. Hence drawing near to God with the Lips, when the Heart was far from him, and the Officiousness, and Pagantry

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geantry of their Sacrifices, are so often mention'd to the *Jews*, even to the pronouncing the Positive Institutions of God by *Moses*, an Abomination unto him. Thus the Prophet *Isaiab*. *To what purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord?*

I am full of the Burnt Offerings of Rams, Isa. i. 11. and the fat of fed Beasts, I delight not in to 15. the Blood of Lambs, or of He-Goats.

When you come to appear before me, who hath requir'd this at your hand to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is an Abomination unto me, the New Moons, and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with, it is Iniquity, even the Solemn meeting. Your New-Moon and your appointed Feasts my Soul hateth: They are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea when you make many long Prayers, I will not hear. But whatever was offer'd at of this kind, tho' it sufficiently shews the harmony between our Lord, and the Antient Prophets: Yet it seems only occasional, and glanc'd at by the later, and is never so particularly, and avowedly insisted on as by our Lord, whose Province this was among many other things, to be in a more eminent degree, as it was Prophecy'd of him that he was to be in a more extraordinary, and particular Manner, an explainer, and enforcer of the Original Sense and Spirit of the Law: And therefore it is, as his Sense of it was more full, and particular than any that went before him; so his manner of inculcating that Sense on his Hearers carry'd with it more Authority, than was ever us'd by any other of the Prophets.

BUT least it should be thought in this particular, that there was nothing advanc'd by our Lord, but what had

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had been before sufficiently, and as fully inculcated, by some one or other of the Antient Prophets (as sure none can think, that carefully read over the Sermon on the Mount:) Yet in his Conference with the Woman of Samaria, nothing of that nature can be so much as Pretended. Not to mention the Notion the Woman her self had, which to be sure was very common, and universally receiv'd by every body that bore the least Relation to the *Jews*, when it had reach'd her Notice, *viz.* that when the *Messiah* should come, *he was to teach them all things*, consequently was to be a greater Prophet than any that went before him: Yet the answer he gave her to that great and important Question between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, whether *Jerusalem* or the Mountain they dwelt on was the Place to be resorted to for Divine Worship; was so very new and extraordinary, that I believe it must be allow'd at least to speak fuller, and more particularly to that Point than ever any one had before him. *Woman*, says our Blessed Lord, *Believe me the hour cometh, when you shall neither in this Mountain nor yet at Jerusalem Worship the Father. Ye Worship ye know Job. iv. 21. not what. We know what we Worship; for Salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall Worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: For the Father seeketh such to Worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that Worship him, must Worship him in Spirit and in Truth.*

I ENTER not here into the Nature, and Perfection of the Doctrine here deliver'd by our Saviour, because of this we shall hereafter have a large Opportunity to Consider, when we come to that part of this Discourse in which we are more immediately engag'd to examine it: But his mention of

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the Worship of God exclusive of the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and that it was hereafter to be carry'd on without resorting thereto, was a Doctrine so very extraordinary to the *Jews*, that it must be at once admitted peculiar to him to deliver it. That the peculiar Worship of God was not always to be preserv'd in its full Perfection, either at *Jerusalem* or Mount *Gerizim*, was what neither *Jews* or *Samaritans* could bear, and the Woman her self, tho' before she acknowledg'd our Lord to be a Prophet, could not imagine his Authority extended so far as to make such a Declaration. The *Messiah* she own'd when he came might be impower'd, (whose part it was to tell them all things) to make some extraordinary decisions of this Nature, but as to his having such a Power, barely by Virtue of his being a Prophet, she plainly intimates to him she could not believe. Whether she, or indeed any of the *Jews* at that time were acquainted with what the Prophet *Hosea* had mention'd of *Israel's* being to abide many *Hof. iii. 4. Days, without a King, without a Prince, without a Sacrifice, without an Image, without an Ephod, and without a Teraphim* ; is very hard to determine : But certain it is, neither this nor many more such dark Passages in the Prophets of this kind, ever made them entertain the least notion that their Temple and all the other Ceremonial Parts of their Religion were to be totally Abolish'd, and give place to a more refin'd and Spiritual way of Worship. No, this was a Doctrine only to be Preach'd by the *Messiah*, and therefore it is we only find it fully, and plainly laid down by him who truly was so, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

ANOTHER Part of our Saviour's Character with regard to his being a Prophet, was, that the influence

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influence of his Doctrines was to be extended to the whole Race of Mankind, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*. This the Natural Pride and Haughtiness of the *Jews* makes them very hard to be convinc'd of. That *only in Jewry was God known, neither should the Heathen ever have any Knowledge of his Law*; is a prejudice still Reigns with them to this Day. *We have Abraham to our Father* is a boast they still vainly persist in, and they cannot yet get over the difficulty of thinking the rest of the World Aliens and Strangers to the Goodness of God, and his Promises, and that all of that kind is only design'd for themselves.

BUT as it may be observ'd in this particular, so it may be almost in every other Instance of the *Messiah's* Character to which the *Jews* are most averse, that they seem to be inculcated by the Antient Prophets in a more than ordinary Manner, and their Language if possible is more clear, and fuller than upon other Occasions; As if God Almighty design'd by it not only to foretel the Matter of Fact it self; but as it were to Anticipate the Prejudice, his Prescience must equally inform him, would arise against the Belief of it.

THE Prophet *Isaiah* in his description of the Extent and Universal influence of the Doctrine of the *Messiah*, breaks forth in Rapture as follows. Sing O Barren, thou that didst not bear, break forth into Singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with Child; for more are the Children of *Isa. liv. 1,* the desolate, than the Children of the Married Wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the *2, 3, 4, 5,* Place of thy Tent, and let them stretch forth *11, 12, 13,* the Curtains of thy Habitations: Spare not, *14.*

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lengthen thy Cords, and strengthen thy Stakes. For thou shalt break forth on thy right-hand, and on thy left, and thy Seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the Desolate Cities inhabited. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy Youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy Widow-hood any more. For thy Maker is thine Husband (the Lord of Hosts is his Name) and thy Redeemer the Holy one of Israel, the God of the whole Earth shall be called. And again, Oh thou afflicted, tossed with Tempest, and not Comforted, behold I will lay thy Stones with fair Colours, and lay thy Foundations with Sapphires; I will make thy Windows of Agates, thy Gates of Carbuncles, and all thy Borders of Pleasant Stones. All thy Children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the Peace of thy Children, In Righteousness shalt thou be Established. Again, Ho! every

Isa. lv. 1, 7. one that thirsteth, come to the Waters. Behold thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that knew not thee, shall run unto thee. Again, I am sought of them that asked not for me: I am found

lxv. 1. of them that sought me not, I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a Nation that was not called by my Name. Once more, Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth:

I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall xlii. 1, 2, 5, 6. bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Street. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set Judgment in the Earth, and the Isles shall wait for his Law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that Created the Heavens, and Stretched them out, I the Lord have called thee in Righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee

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thee for a Covenant of the People, for a Light of the Gentiles. The Prophet *Jeremiah* in his Account of the Extent and Influence of the *Messiah's* Doctrines, tells us, as the *Host of Heaven* cannot be Number'd, neither the Sand of the Sea *Jer. xxxiii. measur'd*; So should be the increase and extent of the Doctrine and Influence of the *Messiah*. *Ezekiel* compares it to a great spreading Cedar, under the Covert of which Fowl of every Wing should dwell. *Ezek. xvii. 22. ult.*

WHETHER it is that the *Jews* are entirely dissatisfy'd with these, and many more such Passages to be found in the Holy Prophets, or what other Reasons they have for their silence, I will not pretend to guess; but in all my Reading, I have not observ'd any thing oppos'd either to their Application to the *Messiah*, or the Sense we produce them for. As to our Gentlemen of Free-thinking, their Talent lies very little in Examining Texts of Scripture, and therefore we are to expect very few Objections of this kind from them. Their great part is to Laugh at all that is offer'd this way in the General, which is indeed the Reason we have had, in the Prosecution of this Topic, so little occasion to mention them. Whether their Mirth results from their Reason they so much boast of, or their Impudence, in the Conclusion we shall have a proper occasion to Consider; in the interim proceed we to bring down this part of the *Messiah's* Character, given by the Antient Prophets, to the History of the Gospel, and what we must know by our own Experience.

THE Gospel speaks our Blessed Saviour such a Prophet in every Part; His being Visited by the Eastern Sages in his Infancy; his Conference with the Woman

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man of *Samaria*, and Particularly the Commission he gave to his Apostles to make *Disciples in all Nations*, and to *preach the Gospel to every Creature*, are standing Monuments of the Plenitude of his Mission, and the universality, and extent of the Doctrine he deliver'd. The after Progress of his Apostles, and the Reception, and coming in of People of all Countries, and to this end their being impower'd by the Holy Ghost to speak in all Languages, in so much as we are told in the Acts, *Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, the Dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphilia, Egypt, the Parts of Libya about Cyrene, Strangers of Rome, Jews, and Profelytes, Cretes, and Arabians*, all heard in their own Tongues the *Wonderful Works of God*. So truly verifi'd was the Prophecy concerning our Lord, that he should *shake all Nations*, and send forth the Rays of his *Light and Truth* to all the dark Corners of the World.

NOR does our own experience less Confirm both the truth of these Prophecies concerning the *Messiah*, and the Application they justly bear to our Lord, than the History of the Gospel it self. Were the Great Continents of the Earth to be over-spread with the kind *Visitations of this Day-Spring from on High*? So we find it in the truest Fact. Did the Prophet say, he should not fail till he set Judgment in the Earth, and even the *Isles* should wait for his Law? How happily is this verifi'd in our particular Case? We who sat in the greatest Darkness, have yet display'd to us this marvellous Light. What Just Reason have we to Sing with the Royal Psalmist, *The Lord is King, the Earth may be glad thereof; yea, the Multitude*

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itude of the Isles may be glad thereof. Glad no doubt they may and ought to be, all of them; but amidst this Multitude of the *Isles*, none more than ours. A Place! more than ordinarily distinguish'd by this Great, and Universal Monarch, not only by the clear discovery he has made of this his Reign over it; but by more than common degrees of Light he has Communicated to it, for the better Understanding of his Laws. But it is to be the Remarkable Aggravation it seems of our guilt, to abuse the greatest Blessings, and turn even the Grace of God it self into Wantonness. We may sport our selves with such Reflections as these as long as we will, but certainly such a thing as Infidelity in *England*, carries in it a Crime, so prodigiously aggravated in all its Circumstances, that nothing less than the God it affronts, who is in his Wrath a Consuming fire, can be able sufficiently to Punish.

I AM sorry the wretched Degeneracy of the Age we live in, should so Naturally give Birth to such Thoughts as these; but sure they cannot be thought impertinent, when the abominable Licence which has been lately taken, makes even the Defence of Christianity it self, I had almost said a necessary Undertaking. But no more of this at present.

THE Fourth particular we were to Consider in the Testimony of the Antient Prophets concerning the *Messiah*, it will easily be remember'd was to be his *Death*.

THE manner of this being in the Christian Creed so very extraordinary, both in the Ignominy, and Cruelty, and indeed every other Circumstance of it; and therefore now as it was at first to the *Jews*, a

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Stumbling Block, and to the Greeks, or in more Modern Language Men of Wit Foolishness; some enquiry into the Account given by them predictively of this part of our Lord's Appearance in the World, will not I hope be altogether unprofitable.

A N D here in pursuance of our former observation we cannot but remark, that the holy Prophets throughout seem more than ordinary to labour this Point; and enter into such particular, and minute Circumstances thereof, as if they were as well apprized of the hardness with which the belief of it would be entertain'd, as of the Matter of Fact it self. The Prophet *Isaiah* seems to Preface his Account of this matter, with words that one would think look directly that way. *Who says he, has believed our Report, and to whom hath the Arm of the Lord been revealed?* And indeed when the extraordinary Nature of the Matter of Fact is consider'd, incredulity was almost Natural. That the Almighty Power, or *Arm* of the Lord should be reveal'd in such Humility, and Abasement as appears in the *Death of the Cross*, must sure in the Prospect, as only foretold, strike all minds with Astonishment and Wonder. This! tho' it was indeed the *Wisdom* and *Power* of God, as declar'd by the Apostle afterwards; Yet as the thoughts, and Counsels of Almighty Wisdom are not like our narrow Apprehensions, 'tis no wonder it so much pass'd Man's Understanding.

B U T whatever difficulties there were in this Great and Awful Mystery of our Redemption in the Prophets Time, to the Christian this matter is made very plain, and familiar; We can easily see it illustrated in every Sacrifice of the Law, and tho' those Types, and Shadows, in themselves were not accepta-

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acceptable to God, yet the *Body* that was prepar'd, and him of whom it was *written in the Volume of the Book* to do the Will of God, he should effectually do this Great and Stupendious Work. In the particulars of this Great Transaction we are told by the Prophet *Daniel*, *That after threescore and two Weeks the Messiah should be cut off, Dan. ix. 26. but not for himself.* In the Language of the Prophet *Isaiah* he is declar'd to *be brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, taken from Prison, and from Judgment, and Stricken for Isa. liii. 7, the Transgression of his People, and made an Offering for Sin.* It were very easie to present abundance of this kind that frequently occurs in the holy Writings, but as we have the most beautiful Epitome of every thing that can almost be produc'd of this kind, in the Abridgment of Bishop *Pearson's Exposition of the Creed*; it were at once wronging the Subject, and the Evidence that may be given in the Point before us, not to give it in the words there kindly presented the World.

“ THIS part (says that excellent Author) will best be illustrated, by comparing the particular Predications, with the Historical Passages of his sufferings, and joining the Prophets and Evangelists together.” If *Zachary* say, *They weigh'd for my Price thirty Pieces of Silver, St. Zach. xi. 12. Matthew will shew Judas Covenanting for that Sum. If Isaiah, that he was Wounded; if Zachary, They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and David particularly they Pierced my Hands, and my Feet; the Evangelists will shew how he was fasten'd to the Cross, and Jesus himself the Print of the Nails. If the Psalmist tell us they* *Isa. liii. 5. Zach. xii. 10*
shall

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shall laugh him to scorn, and shake their
Pf. xxii. 16. Head, saying, *He trusted in God, that he would*
Joh. ix. 25. deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he de-
 lighted in him. St. Matthew will record the
Pf. xxii. 7. 8. same Action, and the same Expression.
Mat. xxvii. If David say, *my God, my God, why hast*
 39. 43. *thou forsaken me?* The Son of David will
 shew in whose Person the Father spake
Pf. xxii. 1. it. Let *Isaiah* tell that *He was number'd*
Mat. xxvii. with the Transgressors, and you will find
 46. him Crucify'd between two Thieves.
Isa. liii. 12. Read in the *Psalmist*, in my Thirst they
Mar. xv. 27. gave me Vinegar to Drink, and in the E-
Pf. lxix. 21. vangelist you will hear Jesus saying, I
Joh. xix. 28. thirst, that this Scripture might be fulfill'd,
 Read farther yet, *They part my Garments*
Pf. xxii. 18. amongst them, and cast Lots upon my Vesture,
Joh. xix. and the Soldiers shall make good the Pre-
 23, 24. diction. Lastly, let the Prophets teach
 that *He shall be brought like a Lamb to the*
Slaughter, and be cut off out of the Land of the Li-
 ving, all the *Evangelists* will declare how like a Lamb
 he suffer'd, and all his Enemies will attest that he
 was cut off.

A PARAGRAPH this, so Excellently digested, as will
 I am satisfy'd excuse the Plagiary to the most snar-
 ling, Critick but whatever may be thought of that
 kind, I must own I should have thought I had done
 the greatest injury both to the World, and the Sub-
 ject I am engag'd in, to have omitted it. After this
 full, and irresistible evidence given both from the
 Prophets, and *Evangelists* of the manner of the *Messiah's*
 Death, the matter of Fact sure cannot be any longer
 in dispute either by *Jew*, or *Gentile*, to whom either
 of their Authorities are of force: But as there is
 some-

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something in the Nature of the Fact itself, that our present Men of oversiz'd Reason will pretend to stagger at, I hope it will not be thought either indulging their Blasphemies, nor altogether impertinent to these Papers, if we do a little digress by some Reflections of this nature, drawn only from the Principles of Humane Reason.

I WOULD not have it imagin'd to be in the least in my Thoughts, to bring down this Great and Aweful Mystery of our Redemption, to a level with any Standard that can be affix'd to Humane Reason; undoubtedly there are many Circumstances in it that might be easily enumerated, in which the Infinite Wisdom, and Goodness of God are so eminently, and in such an extraordinary manner engag'd, that we can safely venture on no Words to express ourselves by, but that admirable, as well as modest Rapture of the Apostle, when he cry'd out, *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Rom. xi. 3. Wisdom, and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* But as the Point in it self (the Death of our Lord) is thought unreasonable to be believ'd by our Men of Wit, as it is declar'd amongst other things by the Christian *Hypothesis* to be a Vicarious Punishment, and Voluntarily undergone by our Saviour in our stead, it cannot I think be improper to consider, what Notion the World entertain'd of this way of Attoning Sin, before it was bless'd with the particular Revelation of the Gospel.

AND here I will for Argument sake grant to these Men, what they would have the World believe, that there never was any such thing, as a Divine Revelation, but the Reason only of Humane Nature, was

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was the Rule from whence they fetch'd all, at least their most Considerable Notions of Religion. To apply this then to the matter in dispute. Certain it is all the World agreed, what we call Sin, was some way or other to be Punish'd. *Jew* and *Pagan* were thus far agreed in their Faith, and as they both Concluded the Deity sometimes to be incens'd at them, so, which is more remarkable, they both equally concurr'd in this particular Expedient in order to appease it, the shedding of Blood. That without shedding of Blood there could be any such thing as Remission of Sin, was, if not the Voice of Revelation, the Voice of Reason; for certain it is the whole Mass of Humane Nature must be allow'd to have this Notion from their Practice agreeable thereto. The frequent mention we have in the *Jewish* writings of the Blood of Bullocks, and of Goats, and the Hecatombs that were offer'd this way by the Gentiles of all Countries and Denominations, would be too great an impeachment of the Learning of our mighty Reasoners to suppose it in the least disputed by them; And the Pomp and Solemnity with which they both carry'd on their Sacrifices of this kind, is enough one would think to convince a Man, they were in earnest upon such occasions; and certain it is the vast expence they put themselves to by such exercises, cannot be thought to look any thing like a Jest, and sure their offering their Sons, and their Daughters (and this was the practice Men of large Reading know full well in some Countries) must in Modern Language be allow'd a Proof of their sincerity; That is, they were really persuaded, so they ought to do.

THUS

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THUS far I think the Point is indisputable from the plainest Matter of Fact: That in order to the Remission of Sin, Blood was to be shed: All Creeds, *Jewish*, and *Pagan* were so far united; and further too, it is to be observ'd this shedding of Blood was as universally agreed by them to be done by way of Sacrifice, and Offering the Victim up to the incens'd Deity. The next thing we are to observe is, whether they thought this might be done in a Vicarious way, and that tho' they personally deserv'd the Punishment, any thing might be Substituted, and accepted in their Stead.

HERE too the Answer is very easie and plain; they took their Victims from their Flocks, and their Herds, and Oxen, and Sheep, Birds, &c. were what they presented instead of themselves, and the practice all over the World speaks the Notion they had too plain to be disputed by Men of Reason. So that if the Common Sense of Mankind may be allow'd to be the Natural Reason of it, neither a Sacrifice, nor a Vicarious one neither can be deem'd unreasonable to conceive; Consequently thus far the Christian *Hypothesis* must stand Justify'd; and there is nothing in the Notion of such a Sacrifice in the General, but what Humane Reason has readily entertain'd, and believ'd: And we are willing to put the Issue of the dispute thus far on the most undeniable Matter of Fact.

SHOULD they we have to deal with, rather chuse to resolve this Universal Practice into Tradition, and that the Notions of this kind took their Original from previous Instructions, deliver'd from Father to Son, that so they ought to Act, and not their

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their own innate reflections; this must in the result suppose a Divine Communication made in the Point, for from a less Original it is impossible to suppose the World could be every where so Unanimous. Particular Absurdities 'tis allow'd may be suppos'd to be impos'd on particular, and different places, but an universal concurrence can never be suppos'd, when it is consider'd 'tis Natural to the Genius of every People to discover, and detect the Folly of their Neighbours.

THUS far then we may justly Conclude, it was not altogether unreasonable to think there might be both such a thing as a Bloody, and Vicarious sacrifice offer'd to the Deity, and it is impossible to think such a Notion in the General unreasonable, without supposing the whole World to concur in one absurdity; which as it destroys the very Notion of Reason it self, so it leaves us entirely at a loss for any Rule, or Standard by which we can Judge of any one Proposition's being reasonable. It is easie to Conceive, when any thing of this Nature was Branch'd into particulars, Absurdity and Superstition should take place, and so we find in Fact it always happen'd, except where the Direction was immediately divine. But then it is to be observ'd there never was such a Concurrence, but different Fancies, and Humours took place, according to the different Genius and Temper of the Places which gave them Birth.

IT being, in spite of all the impudent Wrangles of our Modern Reasoners, not at all either irrational, or unnatural, for the World to be possess'd of the Notion of a Bloody and Vicarious Sacrifice, in order to Attonement, and Remission of Sin; we may certainly venture to insist to our mighty Men of Reason,

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son, there is nothing in the Gospel-Account of this matter in the Death of our Lord Jesus, but what will as well, nay better comport with the strictest Rules of Reason, than any other Account whatever.

IF we consider the Victim it self, we find it of the exactest and most immaculate Purity, in the Sacred Language a *Lamb without Spot or Blemish*: If the Dignity of the Priest that offer'd it, we find him no less than the *Eternal Word, the brightness of the Glorious Deity* Personally united to the Victim it self for that purpose, that it might not only be a Sacrifice, but an equal and sufficient Sacrifice for the Sins of the World. I enlarge not further on this part, because I have had a full opportunity, I hope I may modestly say, to evince this Point, in what is oppos'd in the first Volume of this Work, against another sort of Enemy to this Great Article of our Faith. * Enough I hope is said here to convince our Men of Reason, if they can be persuaded to join Modesty with it; that the Sacrifice, and Death of our Blessed Lord, is not a Point so very unnatural to be believ'd, and entertain'd by Humane Reason, as they would represent it, but something of this kind has been thought by all the World, at all places and in all Times, tho' it was not blest'd as we are with such a Clear, and particular Revelation (notwithstanding some hints, and intimations might have reach'd them) of the Matter of Fact.

BUT they we have to deal with are not content to bound their Impudence, and Blasphemy here; and

* Vid. Vol. I. Pag. 158, 159.

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and beg all the World but themselves for Fools, for entertaining such a Notion; for they stick not to quarrel with God Almighty himself, for acquiescing in, and exacting such a Sacrifice, and boldly tell the World, it is inconsistent with his Goodness, and other Divine Perfections, either to expect, or suffer such a thing. As the Infinite Perfection of the Deity, they tell us, renders him incapable of such a thing as the Passion of Anger, and so consequently there is no occasion in any Case, for means being us'd to appease and reconcile him: So his Goodness would put him at the furthest distance from suffering such a Transaction as was that we have in the Account of our Saviour's Death on the Cross, to take place upon any such Account as the Gospel pretends.

I SHOULD not shock the Reader with this Strange, and Blasphemous way of reasoning, did not the Common usage of it both in Writing, and Conversation render it necessary no longer to be Conceal'd, lest the Enemies of our Faith should Triumph in the imaginary Strength of it, and think it unanswerable. In answer then to these Men, we admit the Infinite Perfection of the Deity, cannot be suppos'd to be susceptible of the Passion of Anger; as Anger is to be Consider'd in us a Perturbation, and indeed Weakness of the Mind; and tho' we do frequently find mention made in the holy Writings of the *Anger*, *Jealousie*, *Wrath*, and *Displeasure* of God, his *hatred*, and *abhorrence* of *Sin*, with several other such like allusions to the Passions of Humane Nature: Yet these, like some other Expressions which represent the Deity to have Hands, Eyes, and other Bodily Parts, are to be taken not in the strict, and Literal Sense, as if
God

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God really had such Passions, or Bodily Parts (for that we are very well assur'd would be a Notion inconsistent with several other more accurate, and proper definitions of the Deity, to be found in other Parts of the same Writings, which declare him to be an infinite Spirit without either Bodily Organs, or Passions) but only as bringing down the methods of God Almighty's proceedings to such ways of Expression, as are familiar, and well understood by us in our intercourse with one another. God Almighty is therefore said to be angry, when his Justice obliges him to punish, and may certainly then as justly be said to be pleas'd and reconcil'd, when that Justice is satisfied so far as to remit the Punishment, which must without such interposition have been inflicted.

THIS then was the Case of all Mankind. Sin had made them obnoxious to the Justice of God, which Justice on the account of the severity of the Punishment it must have inflicted, is sometimes call'd the Wrath, Fury, Anger, &c. of God; but the Blessed Jesus interposing on the behalf of the Delinquent, Stipulates with Divine Justice for the remitting the Penalty; and this as oppos'd to the execution of Justice on the Criminal, is call'd satisfaction: As oppos'd to what is the same in meaning, tho' express'd in other Words, viz. the Wrath, Anger, Fury, &c. of God, is call'd appeasing, reconciling of God. So that neither the Notion of God Almighty's being angry, nor pleas'd and quieted in his resentments, when truly represented, are such absurdities as these Men would make of them, and the whole Difficulty lies in their ignorance of the Nature, and Condescensive way of Scripture Language.

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THO', therefore there can be no occasion for any means to be used to appease the Anger of God consider'd as a Passion, yet sure when it is consider'd as his Justice, that is neither to be trifled with, nor imposed on, some expedient must be found either by our selves, or some other for us; or that being offended, sad must be our Condition.

THE next Objection, that it would be disagreeable to the Goodness of God even to suffer his Justice to be satisfied by our Saviour's Death on the Cross, is the prescribing Rules to his Wisdom as well as Goodness. Certainly it must always be taken for granted there is the exactest harmony between all the Attributes of God; consequently, it cannot therefore be reasonable to imagin his Goodness and Justice can ever Clash. The Rectitude of God Almighty's Perfections, and those Judgments which are *like the great deep*, are not to be scan'd by our narrow Apprehensions: and if his Great and Almighty Wisdom thought the Death of the Cross a proper Expedient, who are we to dispute? Can the Goodness of God be disputed, *when he so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life?* Is not this a true saying, and worthy of all Men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners? Ought we not all to rejoice in this, that if any Man Sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins?

THIS is the account the Gospel gives us of this great Transaction, and shall we, we for whose benefit and preservation all was done; ungrateful wretches! say it was inconsistent with the Goodness of God?

If

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If the Justice of God exacted so great a Price for our Redemption, shall we quarrel both with the Receiver and Pay-Master? Justice sure will be allow'd one of the Essential Attributes of God, as well as Mercy and Goodness; and it is as impossible for *the Judge of all the Earth not to do right*, as to do any thing inconsistent with that abundant Mercy and Goodness these Men would seem so entirely fond of. How durst they endeavour then to separate what is so immutably united even in the Essence of God himself?

THIS Justice it is certain was offended. Wickedness always has and will be too flagrant to make this the least dispute. What then could be done to satisfy this Justice? The Blood of Bulls, and of Goats, could not in the Judgment of these Men themselves effect this. Not that of the most pure and spotless of our own race; because Reason as well as Revelation assure us, the fruit of our Body cannot be given for the Sin of our Soul. Not the most exalted and Powerful Angels; because even them the exact Justice of God Charges with folly, and tho' they excel in strength, are not able to quit more than their own Obligations. No! it could only be in the immaculate Lamb of God, in whom Mercy and Truth of this kind could meet together, and Righteousness and Peace be made thus to kiss each other.

BUT after all this, and a great deal more that might be said of this kind, sufficient to baffle all the vain Cavils of these bold and audacious Men against this important Article of the Christian Faith: Yet let not any thing of this Nature be rested on as the last, and decisive Reason of our Creed in this particular. These lower and subordinate ways of reasoning, serve well enough to silence the folly, and

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temerity

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Temerity of Men, who allow themselves every Liberty of speaking against things they do not understand, and therefore are not improperly very often made use of by Divines; but the Christian believes this, and all the other Great and Important Articles of his Faith, upon that which is a reason above every other that can be given, namely, because he is sure he has Divine Testimony for it; and however the *Labyrinths* and intricacies of Logick or the scholastick Methods of Reasoning, may perplex and amuse him, this he is sure can never deceive him in the particular before us. For as he is very sure what we call the Old and New Testament is exceeding plain, and full in the Point: So he never much troubles himself to think of any other reason for what he finds there deliver'd and propos'd to him as truth, than that which is indeed a reason never to be resisted, the Divine Authority and Veracity of the Speaker.

To pursue then (as it is our main design notwithstanding this Digression) this method of Reasoning, proceed we now in the last place to Consider the Testimony of the Ancient Prophets concerning the Resurrection and Ascension of the Messiah, and his afterwards sending the Holy Ghost for the Confirmation of the whole. And first, let us consider the Article of the Resurrection.

ON this, the Royal Psalmist is very elegant, and delivers himself as follows. *I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my Glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope. For* Psal. xvi. 8. *thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor suffer thy Holy one to see Corruption.*

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THE illustration of this Prophecy needs no other Comment than that of the Apostle St. Peter, which we find made by him in the *Acts*. Men and Brethren, says he, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both Dead and Buried, and his Sepulchre is with us unto this Day. Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an Oath to him, that of the fruit of his Loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to *Act. ii. 29.* sit on his Throne : He seeing this before, to 36. spake of the Resurrection of Christ, that his Soul was not left in Hell, neither did his Flesh see Corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are Witnesses. Therefore being by the right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which you now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the Heavens ; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right-hand, untill I make thy foes thy Footstool. Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have Crucified, both Lord and Christ.

S A I N T Paul entering into this Argument, concerning our Lord's Resurrection, as foretold by the Prophets, expresses himself thus. We declare unto you glad Tydings, how that the Promise which was made unto the Fathers, God hath *Act. xiii. 32.* fulfill'd the same unto us their Children, in to 37. that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to Corruption, he said on this Wise, I will give you the sure Mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another place,

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Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see Corruption. For David, after he had served his own Generation by the will of God fell asleep, and was laid unto his Fathers, and saw Corruption: But he whom God raised again, saw no Corruption.

To enforce this Argument with yet greater Authority, our Blessed Lord, as he foretold his own Resurrection repeatedly in the fullest and most particular Words, so he observes it to be predictively Typified in the example of *Jonas*. Some of the Scribes and Pharisees demanding of our Lord, in Confirmation of what he had deliver'd, a sign; he answers them with this Application of the example of the Prophet *Jonas* to the Case of his own Resurrection. *An Evil and Adulterous Generation (says he) seeketh after a Sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but that of the * Prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three Days, and three Nights in the Whale's Belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart*

* As our Blessed Lord was not in fact, as here literally express'd, three nights and three days in the heart of the Earth; I cannot here omit giving the Curious the remarks of a Pen, which they that have read them before me, will easily see how much I am oblig'd to. It is observ'd then, From this resemblance of our Lord's Resurrection to that of the Prophet *Jonas* being cast out of the Whale's Belly, we cannot Conclude that Christ's Body was for the space of three whole days, and as many nights in the Grave. For the Expression in the Sign here given, as also others, *After three days I will rise again. And Destroy this Temple, and in (or within) three days I will build it up*, being far less frequent, must be so interpreted, as that they be reducible to the more general and constant Phrase of his rising again on the

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heart of the Earth. Here it may be easily observ'd, that not only the matter of fact it self, viz. that the Messiah was to rise from the Dead, but the Circumstance of time also is prefigured and foretold. He was not only to rise, but to rise in three days from the Dead.

WHEN the Divinity and Authority of the Reasoning here presented is consider'd, certainly there needs nothing further to be said in Confirmation of a Point so unexceptionably establish'd; but howe-

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the third day. And, according to this Phrase both with the *Hebrews*, and *Greeks*, the day on which he died is one, and the day on which he rose another, so that there could intervene but one day and two nights between his Death and Resurrection. Thus amongst the *Jews* in the Case of Circumcision, the Child eight days old was to be Circumcis'd, tho' six days pass'd only between the Birth and Circumcision; in respect of our Lord we read, *that eight days were accomplish'd for the Circumcising of the Child*; yet was he Born on the first of these, *December* the 25th, and Circumcis'd on the last, *January* the first. In like manner the Priests by the Appointment of *David*, were to Minister before the Lord eight days, tho' each Course had but Seven entire days, the Sabbath on which it began, and the Sabbath on which it terminated being reckon'd into the Account. To give one instance more, the day of Pentecost was the fiftieth day of the Wave-Offering, yet both these Festivals were included in the number of fifty days, as those of *Easter* and *Whitsunday* now stand. As to the *Greeks*, in their names of intermitting Fevers, the *Tertian*, *Quartan*, &c. which we still apply in the same manner, the days of perfect intermission are always fewer by two, than the number that gives the Denomination. And as our Saviour did rise from the Dead *the third Day* properly, so he may be said to have been three days, and three nights, in the heart of the Earth, by an usual Figure. For the *Hebrews* not being used to Composition,

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ver after these it may not be altogether unprofitable to take a short view of such observations, which tho' they are not back'd with so great Authority, yet are not without their use.

IT is observ'd then further by some, that *Isaac* is a Type, and significantly exhibits the Resurrection of the Messiah. His Father *Abraham* offer'd him up, *accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the Dead, from whence also he receiv'd him in a figure*; So the Author to the *Hebrews* Heb. xi. 19. observes. For as in the purpose of the Holy Patriarch, the Youth was actually to have died: So his being spared by the Goodness and Compassion of God, and render'd back to his Father alive, does not unaptly as it were represent to us his being rais'd from the Dead, and consequently very appositely Prefigures to us the real and proper Resurrection of the Messiah.

TO this several of the Ancient Fathers are wont to reduce the example of *Joseph*, who being really slain in the Intention of some of his Brethren, by his after appearing to them alive, he did not improperly Typifie the true and proper Resurrection of our Lord. Several Circumstances of the History of *Joseph* are observ'd by them in order to illustrate the justness of the Parallel; amongst others his being put in the Dun-

express it by the *Evening, and the Morning*, the Greek (*Νυχθήμερον* or) Natural day, so that three days, and three nights are in the Computation of time, no more than three days; and three days are, as we before observ'd, then said to be Accomplish'd, or fulfill'd, when the third day is come, tho' not yet wholly pass'd over. *Brief Exposition of the Apostles Creed.* p. 108. 109.

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Dungeon is thought no unfit representation of the Grave, and the several wonderful Series of Providence which appear'd in his deliverance from thence, elegantly speak the same Divine Power afterwards truly rais'd up the Messiah even from the Dead.

T H E R E are others who have thought that not only the Time, with regard to the number of days in which the Body of the Messiah was to lie in the Grave, is prefigur'd, but the very day on which he was to rise is Typifi'd, and prefigur'd by one of the Positive Institutions of the Law of *Moses* itself. The Instance of this kind they give in the *waved Sheaf* at the Festival of the *First Fruits*, the lifting up of which by the Priest consecrated all the Harvest. The ground of this Opinion is, because it was the Custom to perform this Ceremony the Morning after the Paschal Solemnity, so termed, whether it fell on the proper Sabbath or not. Thus it is expressly said, *Speak unto the Children of Israel, and say unto them, When you be come unto the Land which I shall give unto you, and shall reap the Harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your Harvest unto the Priest: and he shall wave the Sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you, on the Morrow after the Sabbath the Priests shall wave it.* How truly in resemblance of this, the Messiah, the first fruits of them that slept, might be said to acquit what this Institution but barely Typifi'd, his rising at the dawn of the Morning after the Paschal Sabbath, and presenting, or waving himself before his Eternal Father, as having finish'd and confirm'd the great Work of our Redemption, the History of the Gospel gives us a full, as well as a happy account of.

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I MENTION not here the pleasing reflections which may be naturally drawn from this account given by the Ancient Prophets of the Resurrection of the Messiah ; because for these we shall hereafter have a better opportunity. And because I would have some regard to brevity, as well as other Considerations, I do not enumerate all the observations of this kind that have occur'd to my Reading. Sufficient certainly has been said to establish the matter of fact, as foretold, and prefigur'd many Years before it commenced, and that being the end pursu'd, I little value what may be thought of the extent of my Reading.

PASS we from the Resurrection of the Messiah, to that which was to be the next part of his Triumph or Exaltation, his Ascension ; and of this too we find an Account given by the Antient Prophets, not only in the plainest Terms, but with a Pomp and Solemnity of Expression becoming the occasion. The Royal Prophet regaling himself with the delightful prospect, breaks forth into this ecstasick, and divine Rapture. *Lift up your heads, says he, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting Doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.* After *Pf. xxiv. 7.* which having by a sort of Divine Soliloquy ask'd, *who this King of Glory was ?* He immediately subjoins the Answer. *The Lord strong and mighty in Battle, the Lord of Host, he is the King of Glory.*

THE exact agreement of the Epithets, as here applied to the Messiah, we have before in this † Work
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† Vid. Vol. I. Pag. 124.

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had an opportunity to Consider, and the Completion as well as Explanation of the Propheſie we have in the moſt familiar, and historical view, deliver'd to us in the Goſpel. There we are told, that *when he (the Meſſiah) had ſpoken to and Bleſſed his Diſciples, even while he Bleſſed them, he was parted from them; and while they beheld, he was taken Luk. xxiv, up, and a Cloud receiv'd him out of their ſight; they looking ſtedfaſtly to Heaven i. 10. as he went up.*

BUT becauſe the Bodily Eyes of the Apoſtles could not poſſibly follow him to the vaſt Diſtances of thoſe Realms of Glory to which he Aſcended, and the intervention of the Cloud might leave them in perplexity as to the place where he was gone; we are further inform'd by the ſame Goſpel, that two of the Celeſtial inhabitants themſelves are ſent for their Satisfaction. By theſe, while they were gazing up to Heaven, they are told, *This ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall ſo come Acts i. 11. in like manner, as you have ſeen him go into Heaven.*

IN ſome other Accounts given by the *Pſalmiſt* of the Aſcenſion of the Meſſiah, we find him repreſented agreeable to the Practice of Earthly Monarchs at their Triumphs, as giving his Largeſſes and ſpreading his Bounty and Munificence to thoſe about him. Thus it is ſaid of him, *Thou haſt aſcended up on high, thou haſt led Captivity Captive, Pſ. xlviii. 18. thou haſt received Gifts for Men.* In the Application of this Propheſie by *St. Paul*, where the Inſtances of theſe Benefactions are enumerated, as made Good in the Perſon of our Lord, it is obſerv'd that

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that he gave some *Apostles*, some *Prophets*,
Eph. iv. 11, some *Evangelists*, and some *Pastors* and
 12. *Teachers*; for the *Perfecting* of the *Saints*,
 for the *Work* of the *Ministry*, for the *Edi-
 fying* of the *Body*, or *Church* of *Christ*.

IF we go from these Declarations of the *Psalmist*,
 to such *Figures* and *Similitudes* under the *Law*, as
 were design'd to exhibit, and prefigure this part of
 the *Messiah's* Triumph; we find the *High-Priest*
 entering once a year into the *Holy of Holies*, design'd
 and appointed for that purpose. This is what *St.
 Paul* himself observes. *We*, says he, *have a great High-
 Priest*, who being made higher than the *Hea-
 Heb. vii. 26*. *vens*, hath passed through the *Heavens*;
 iv. 14. vi. and is enter'd into that within the *Veil*,
 19. ix. 26. far above all *Heavens*, to appear in the *Pre-
 sence* of *God*.

NOR can this Construction of the *Apostle* be
 thought at all *Strain'd* and *Unnatural*, when the
Account Josephus himself gives of the *Design* and
Contrivance of what was call'd the *Sanctum Sancto-
 rum*, in the *Temple* of the *Jews*, is consider'd. "The
 " *Division* of the *Temple*, says he, into three *Parts*,
 || "seems to hold some *Analogy* with the *Consideration*
 " of the *Universe*. The first *Part*, where the very
 " *Priests* are not permitted to enter, may be allow'd
 " to have some resemblance to *Heaven* it self, as
 " the *Throne* of the *Divine Majesty*". The next
Apartment he compares to the *Earth* and *Sea*, &c.
 From whence as it is apparent that the very *Nature*
 and *Texture* of the *Building* was so contriv'd as
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|| *Antiq. lib. iii. cap. 6.*

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to exhibit to them a Notion of the highest Heaven, with it's being the peculiar privilege of the High-Priest to enter therein: So the Messiah being foretold by all the Prophets to appear in a more eminent degree, a High-Priest, the Apostle's inference that he was therefore to enter the Holy of Holies, of which that in their Temple was but a Type, and Shadow, is a thought so very natural and easily deduced, that the *Jews* themselves cannot with any face pretend to oppose it.

WOULD we view in the Account of the Antient Prophets the finishing Part of the Triumph of the Messiah's Ascension, you have it in the Words of the *Psalmist*, in terms so irresistibly applicable to the promis'd Messiah, that when our Blessed Lord mention'd them to his captious Adversaries, they were able to make no other returns than what appear'd in their Silence and Confusion. We read them thus. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Ps. cx. 1. Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy Footstool.* Accordingly the Apostle expressly observes, that when he (the Lord, or Messiah here spoken of) *had by himself purg'd our sins, he then commenc'd this Glorious Session, and Heb. i. 3. sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

THE Evidence we have of the matter of fact, it will easily be remembred in the Account we have already produc'd of it from the Gospel, is back'd with the Testimony both of Men and of Angels: But we are able yet to carry it higher than this, and bring in the immediate Testimony of God himself to confirm this Article of our Faith; and this properly introduces the Account given by the Prophets of the Mission

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sion of the Holy Ghost in order to the full, and irresistible Confirmation of the whole.

THE Prophet *Isaiah* giving his description of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, promises the *Jews*, and assures them, that thus saith the Lord, *I Isa. xliv. 3. will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry Ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine Offspring.* In the Language of the Prophet *Joel*, this diffusion and universal influence of the Holy Ghost, is declar'd and promised to extend to all Mankind.

It shall come to pass, says he, that I will Joel ii. 28. pour my Spirit upon all Flesh, and your Sons and your Daughters shall Prophesie, your old Men shall Dream dreams, and your young Men shall see Visions. And Lastly, the Prophet *Zachariah* tells us, *It shall be in that day, that living Waters shall go out from Jerusalem; and the Zach. xiv. 8, 9. Lord shall be King over all the Earth, there shall be one Lord, and his Name One.*

THE exact Completion of these and many more such like Prophecies, the Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost on the Apostles, with the many astonishing Evidences they gave to all the World of his Miraculous influences upon them, put out of the reach of any possible dispute both the truth of the Predictions, and the Reality and Divinity of the Power that mov'd the Apostles. The witnesses of the effect of this extraordinary effusion were People of all Countries, and the nature of the evidence that was given for their Conviction, that it was truly the Spirit they pretended to, and insisted on, that influenc'd them, was such in which they all were Judges, and could not possibly be deceiv'd. 'Tis true,

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the sound from Heaven, and the rushing as it were of a mighty Wind, with the appearing of Cloven Tongues like fire which sat on each of the Apostles, was an occurrence that happen'd privately in the House where they were assembl'd by themselves; but the effects of this their falling on them were open and visible to every Eye, and heard by every Ear. Not only *Jews*, devout Men out of every Nation under Heaven, but a whole Multitude of People of different Nations and Languages, were Confounded, and amazed to hear them speak in their own Tongues, the wonderful Works of God. They were in doubt indeed, but not at all of the matter of fact (for that they heard and saw) but what it could mean? Different too were their Speculations as to the *Phænomena*; some were entirely perplex'd and confounded, others turn'd them into ridicule, but when the Apostle had soberly reminded them, that what they saw and heard, was not only foretold by the Antient Prophets, and that that Jesus whom they had some of them Crucified, was now risen from the Dead, whereof he and his fellow Apostles were Witnesses, and being now exalted to the right hand of God, had receiv'd from the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost which was then shed forth as they heard, and saw; when St. Peter I say had thus irresistably reason'd the Case, such was the effect the same Holy Spirit had on the Multitudes as well as the Apostles, that there were added unto them the same Day about three thousand *Acts ii. ult.* Souls, every one of which, in the Language of the Prophet *Zachariah* before mention'd, acknowledg'd the Lord to be King of all the Earth, and this Lord to be one, and his Name to be One.

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THUS have I with as much brevity, and little perplexity as I am able, laid before you the Testimony of Divine Prophecy, as it gives in its evidence for the Truth of the Christian Religion. The Nature and Force of this sort of Testimony in it self, as it is void of all possibility of putting any deceit upon us, and its being peculiarly engag'd in the Confirmation of our holy Faith, exclusive even of the same to the Law of *Moses* it self, is what we have before observ'd. We add now further, that the Case before us is attended with such Circumstances, as it appears to Vouch for the Truth of the Christian Religion, as must determine the Reason of Human Nature to Conclude in its favour, if there is such a thing as Reason in the World.

FOR first it is to be observ'd, that as the Divine Records from whence we have produc'd the particulars, were kept with the utmost care, and publicly read every Sabbath-Day, so that the meanest of the *Jews* were acquainted with the Purport, and Contents, and accordingly had all of them entertain'd the greatest Expectations of the Promis'd Messiah, of whom such great things were spoken: So they (the *Jews*) still retain such hopes and expectations, of the Messiah's being still to Come, that the main difference between the *Jewish*, and Christian Creed, seems to be this, that the one on the Account of the Testimony of the Antient Prophets believe that the Messiah so often Promis'd by them will come; and the other from the exact harmony between the History of the Gospel, and their Predictions, believe that he really is Come. The advantages the Christian *Hypothesis*, has of the *Jewish*, the Premises will sufficiently Conclude, and that their agreement so far is the effect of
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Concert between the Contending Parties, the great and remarkable Enmity between them sufficiently speaks. Men of Penetration, and such uncommon degrees of Sagacity as the Gentlemen we have to deal with, are not, sure, to be told the *Jews* never can be suppos'd to make any Concessions with a Design to serve the Interest of Christianity. No, certainly this they are fully appriz'd of, the affections of the *Jews*, and the Infidels this way are much upon a Par, and tho' the former have not got the knack of Laughing at the Divine, and awful Writings of the Prophets, they have as little inclination to apply them in Favour of the Truth of the Messiahship of our Lord, or his Doctrines, as themselves.

AND as there is no manner of Ground for any rational Man to doubt the being, and reality of the matter of fact, that there were in the World long before the appearance of our Blessed Saviour, such Persons as the Prophets whose Testimonies are here produc'd: So it is impossible to conceive the Christians could by any Arts so manage and interpolate their Writings, as to make them in the least serve their Cause. Had this been practis'd, the *Jews*, who must have known it immediately, as well as they themselves, could with abundance of ease have produc'd the Original, and have blasted such an imposture in the Birth. In the Case of some Works indeed, while the Original and True Copies were lodg'd in very few hands, something of this kind may be easily effected, and yet afterwards it may be very hard for Men of the greatest abilities to discover the Cheat (and to this perhaps may be owing a great deal of the boasted Antiquity of the Church of *Rome*) but such an attempt upon the Publick Records of a Nation, and those Records too so well known, that Copies of them are to

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be found almost in every hand, were a thing so ridiculous in the very thought, that it would carry in it more of the signs of the Madman, than the impostor.

AND yet if such had been the practice of the first Christians, they must have advanc'd further still than this; they must not only have forg'd several Passages, and interpolated them into some Copies of the Writings of the Antient Prophets; but they must have had the effrontery to have appeal'd to those very passages which they had thus forg'd, in Confirmation of their Cause, to People who had an immediate opportunity of turning to, the true Copies they pretended to appeal to, and thereby exposing them to the Contempt, and indignation of all that either heard or read them.

BESIDES, 'tis further to be observ'd, that this method of Arguing from the Testimony of the Antient Prophets, was not only made use of by the Apostles, and first Followers of our Lord; but by himself. And as by many of his expressions, it is fully apparent he was appriz'd of all those parts of the Messiah's Character which they foretold: So it must surely be allow'd some of those Parts were of that Nature, that bare Human Nature could not be fond of. To lead a life of exquisite sorrow, and to finish this Life with a Cruel and Ignominious Death, this was to be all the Glory of the Messiahship while on Earth, and was thoroughly known, and plainly declar'd to be so by our Lord himself. How plainly did he tell his Apostles, after their own Eyes had been Witnesses of the Miseries of his Life, that he must go to *Jerusalem*, and there be put to Death. Certainly had our Lord been a bare Pretender to the Messiahship predicted

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dicted by the Prophets, this part of the Character had at least been avoided. How easie had it been to have done so! Those that had been his Constant Attendants knew not how to believe this sad scene of Calamity: Very certain it is, the general Expectation of the *Jews* turn'd rather on a Conqueror, than a Victim, and consequently they would be the farthest of any People in the World, from Reviling him with the want of this part of the Messiah's Character. But he who knew it was 'meet for him to fulfil all Righteousness, and how ignorant soever others might be, knew too the Errand he came into the World for, was chiefly to die for the sins of it, willingly, not only according to the Predictions of the Antient Prophets, but those he made himself, was led like a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as the Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth.

'Tis the Observation of an Apostle, that *for a Good Man some would vouchsafe even to die*. History perhaps may afford us some such exalted Examples of Heroism, but this part of our Blessed Lord's Character abundantly surmounts all parallel of that kind; he died neither for a Good Man, nor his Friends; but even while we were wicked, and his Enemies, he laid down his Life for us; 'twas not by Compulsion, but Choice; *no Man took his Life away from him, but he laid it down of himself*. This is the Account the Gospel gives us in the Article of his Death, and certainly it must in reason be thought that he who was thus truly a Voluntary Agent in the matter, only for undertaking the Character of the Messiah, (since it was so well known by him, however conceal'd from others, that such must have been the Part the Messiah was to act, if he fulfill'd what was foretold by the Prophets concerning him) he could be

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be nothing less than that very Messiah he pretended to be.

BUT further, it is to be observ'd, the Part the Messiah was to act, as foretold by the Prophets, was in many Parts so far from being inviting to any other but the true Messiah to assume it; that it was altogether impracticable. For could it be suppos'd all the Parts of the Messiah's Life, and even his Death could have been undertaken by some other Person fully acquainted with what the Prophets had said, yet tho' another could have died, he could not rise from the Grave. And if he had not done this, he must have come short of the Predictions of the Prophets, and consequently been wanting in the Evidence of the Truth of his Messiahship, so far as it is fetch'd from the Testimony of Prophecie.

IT may possibly be here observ'd, that since the Character of the Messiah was to be of that Nature, as deliver'd by the Prophets, that none but the true, and real Messiah, either could, or would take it upon him; it is surprizing we have both from *Jews*, and Christians so many Accounts of Persons, besides him who was Crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, assuming of it.

BUT to this it is easily answer'd, such Persons had only an Eye to the splendid Part of his Character, and the Expectation of the *Jews* that way; and as to the suffering, no doubt they were inclinable (as the *Jews* themselves seem to be by their notion of two Messiah's, a Suffering, and a Triumphant one) to leave the honour of that entirely to our Saviour.

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I HAVE been the longer on these Observations, because I would give the Reader not only some Competent Notion of those Principles from which the Christian Religion first took its rise, and carried with it such clear and irresistible Conviction where-ever it was propos'd : But also that he might remark too the particular weight, and Cogency of those Arguments which were first made use of by our Blessed Lord, and his Apostles for the proof of what they deliver'd, and how much they exceed other Methods of Reasoning made use of by the most Accomplish'd, and Exalted Writers. As the Christian Dispensation was to be in its Nature, the most exalted, and perfect that ever was propos'd to the World : So the Wisdom of Almighty God thought fit to use such irresistible Methods of Argument for the Confirmation of the truth of it ; that it is hard to determine, in which the Power, and Energy of the Deity is most apparent, Matters of Fact related by the Gospel itself, or the reasons given by our Blessed Lord and his Apostles, why such Matters of Fact should take place, and be the peculiar Marks, and Characteristicks of the Messiah's appearance in the World. Lay then deep in your mind the weight, and strength of those Words of our Blessed Lord, when he was a going to leave his Disciples, and told them, *These are the Words which I spake unto you whilst I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.* And let it be your Prayer to the same Blessed Jesus, that he would open your understanding, that you may understand the Scriptures, that you may be convinc'd, and made fully to believe that thus it was Written by the Holy and Antient Prophets, and

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therefore that thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again the third day from the Dead; with every other particular enumerated in these Papers. And to this end, should we be wanting of proper and decent Words to express our selves by, certainly we cannot well make use of fitter than those of the Excellent Collect of our Church for the Second Sunday in *Advent*.

BLESSED Lord! who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our Learning; Grant that we may in such wise Hear them, Read, Learn, Mark, and inwardly digest them, that by Patience and Comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting Life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

THE Second Medium by which we were to prove the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to be, what we insist it to be, a Divine Revelation of the Will of God, You may remember was to be drawn from the Miracles perform'd by our Lord in Confirmation of his Divine Mission.

THIS too was an Argument made use of by our Blessed Lord himself, in proof of his Divine Mission. *If, says he, I had not done among you the Works which none other Man did, you had not had Sin; but under such manifest evidence as they gave of his Divinity, he declares the Infidelity of even Sodom and Gomorrah was more tolerable than theirs. And again, he warmly presses this Argument, and tells the Jews, tho' they would not believe him, yet believe him they ought for his Works sake. Agreeable to this, when the Disciples of St. John Baptist came to him, and ask'd him that Important Question, whether that he, was he*
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that should Come, or whether they were to look for another ; his Answer to them was, Luk. vii. 22. Go your ways and tell John those things you have seen, and heard, how that the Blind see, the Lamé walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf hear, and the Dead are raised.

As there is here an Enumeration of such plain matters of fact, as were thought by our Blessed Lord himself sufficient to determine the belief of St. *John* the Baptist, in the Point of the Truth of his Messiahship ; a particular Examination of each of them, in the Accounts we have in the Gospel, will not improperly engage us, whilst we are arguing from the force of our Saviour's Miracles.

WE have then here presented to our View, five sorts of Miracles urg'd by our Lord, as a proof of his Messiahship. Not that all that he did of that kind is reducible even to these ; his turning Water into Wine ; healing several diseases with a touch, nay, a Word ; making the Dumb to speak, Dispossessing of Devils, Commanding the Winds and Sea to obey him ; with many other things which from the Words of the Gospel we are told the World could not contain the Books might be made, in giving the Account of them ; nor that there are to be found only single Instances of each of these, but as a distinct Consideration of these singly will be sufficient to our purpose, we shall confine our selves only to some Instances of each of the particulars in the order they lie before us. And first of his making the Blind to see,

OF this, among other Instances, we have an Account of a Man that was born Blind, given us in St. *John's* Gospel. The History of the Fact is this. Our

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Blessed Lord, having by a Miracle convey'd himself out of the Temple, and escap'd the rage and fury of the *Jews*, who had taken up Stones, with an intent to Stone him, as he pass'd, he cast his Eye on a Man that was^b born Blind. The greatness of his Calamity, having rais'd in some of his Disciples the Curiosity to enquire, whether it was inflicted on him as a Judgment, on the Account either of his own, or his Parents Sins? our Lord answers both these Questions in the negative, and so far lets them into the Secret purposes of God in this particular, as to tell them *it was to make manifest the Works of God in the giving him his sight.* Hereupon he spat on the Ground, and made Clay of the Spittle, with which anointing the Eyes of the blind Man, he bids him go wash in the Pool of *Siloam*. The poor Man following his Direction, immediately finds the happy effects, and returns with the Blessing of his sight.

THE Surprisingness of the Miracle, many who before knew the Man, and knew him withal to be born Blind, and had just before seen him to be Blind, as he sat and begg'd, rais'd in some a doubt whether he were the same Man. Amidst this perplexity the Man interposes himself, and assures them he was the very Man, that some of them knew, and saw to be Stone Blind. The Question being then put to him, *from whom, and by what means he receiv'd his sight?* The Man perfectly ignorant who our Saviour was, tells them only what he heard by general report, *that a Man who was called Jesus, made Clay, and spread it on his Eyes, bidding him go wash himself in the Pool of Siloam, and he acting accordingly immediately received his sight.* The fact being in its Nature so very extraordinary, and the truth of it so very plain, some of the Spectators thought it necessary it should yet be further

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ther examin'd into, and therefore they carry the Man to the * *Pharisees*, whose Sagacity probably they Conclude, might render them able better to detect the imposture, if it were one, than they could. From these then the Man stands a fresh Examination, as to the Circumstances of the whole Transaction. The Man still persists in the same Relation. Not satisfied with this, the Parents of the Man being known, they were sent for, who being ask'd by them, *whether the Man was their Son, and born blind, with the manner how he came to see?* They Answer, *they knew him to be their Son, and that he was born blind, but as to the particulars of the means by which his Eyes were opened, or by whom, they could not tell.* Restless with the sense and plainness of the matter of fact, they again call the Poor Man to them, and in order to elude the Power, and Divinity that appear'd in the whole, as our Lord was concern'd in it, they endeavour to conceal the Malice and Envy of their hearts under the pretence of giving honour to God, and therefore they tell him *he must give God the Praise*, and not ascribe any of the Benefit he had receiv'd to our Saviour, for he, they knew, was a *Sinner*. The Poor Man, finding the Honour of his kind Benefactor treated

* THE *Pharisees* were a Set of Men among the *Jews* in our Saviour's Time, to whom they paid the utmost Deference, and in any Points of Difficulty they were immediately resorted and apply'd to. The *Pharisees*, says *Josephus*, are a certain Set among the *Jews*, that valu'd themselves upon their legal Righteousness, and ostentation of being Holier than their Neighbours. These People had the Name of *Pharisees*; an Arrogant crafty sort of Men, that in the Pride and Vanity of their Hearts, make no Conscience of affronting Kings, and trampling the Royal Authority under their Feet. *Antiq. Lib. xvii. Cap. iii.*

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ted with this base detraction, honestly, and bluntly replies: *Whether he be a sinner, or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see.* Stung with this, and ready to burst with rage and envy, they again ask him *what did he do to thee? How opened he thine Eyes?* The Poor Man, equally fir'd with an honest resentment, as they were with Malice, tells them he had sufficiently inform'd them before, and he could see no purpose in the repetition, without they had a mind to be his Disciples. Quite baffled and confounded with the honest Reasoning of the Man, they now fly to abusive Language, and Charge him with being one of our Lord's Party, and an Apostate from the Law of Moses. Enlighten'd by this treatment as much in his mind, as he had before been happily in his Body, the Man now at once boldly Vindicates both the Truth of the Miracle, and the Honour of him that did it. Having then observ'd their Contemptuous manner of expression concerning our Lord, in telling him they knew not whence he was, he answers, *Herein is a Marvellous thing, that you know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened my Eyes. Now we know that God beareth not Sinners; but if any Man be a Worshipper of God, and doth his Will, him he beareth. Since the World began, was it not heard that any Man opened the Eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, he could do nothing.* Reasoning of this Nature was only to be answer'd with reproaches and outrage, the Man therefore is scornfully told by them, he was altogether *born in Sin, and did he pretend to teach them?* No! What they wanted in Argument, they supply'd with Pride and Revenge, and tho' he could not be answer'd, he might be excommunicated, and therefore they cast him out of the Synagogue, *vid. John ix.*

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THIS is the History of the Miracle as we find it from St. *John*, in the particular Circumstances of it there was no possibility of deceit and Imposture. The Man was generally, and very well known, and his way of Life must needs make him so, being a publick, and common Begger, and therefore subject to the Notice of every Passenger his whole Life, or at least the most Considerable Part of it, previous to the Working the Miracle upon him. Had he ever had the happiness of seeing before, there must have been enough able, and willing upon the strict examination was made, to have detected his pretences, and to have confronted him with the Cheat. Nor could he have any possible temptation to impose on the World, because our Lord was not only entirely unknown to him before, but he pull'd upon himself by the bare relation of the matter so much immediate rage, and persecution, as nothing but the truth, and integrity of his heart could, have supported him under it. The Reputation, and Authority of the *Pharisees* among his Country-men, would he must needs know deprive him of those little Reliefs on which his subsistence turn'd, and his being excommunicated made it Criminal for any of them, so much as to give him a piece of Bread, and every Body would almost deem it merit to insult, and abuse him. For the *Pharisees* being, as † *Josephus* informs us, the great Doctors of the Law, and the best read Men in the *Jewish* Rites and Ceremonies, whatever they did or said, was paid the utmost deference to, and nothing would be believ'd that clash'd with their Opinion. This the Parents of the poor Man were so sensible of, that when they were examin'd, they very Cautiously shifted the matter wholly

† Wars of the *Jews* lib. ii. cap. 7.

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wholly on their Son, knowing it had been already determin'd, that if any one should speak favourably of our Lord, he would be cast out of the Synagogue, so that they were afraid even to speak what they knew to be True.

THE particular case of the Man as to his Blindness, whether it was owing to a thorough and unalterable growing together of his Eye-lids, which made him unable ever to open them, (as is the Case of some) or whether the *Cornea* or outward Coat of his Eyes was so inflamed and corrupted with humours, as entirely to thicken, and make dark those Transparent Juices which Physicians tell us are the first inlets to the Sense of seeing; or the defects of what they call the *Retina*, a Membrane which yet more distinctly presents the object to the Imagination; or lastly, an incapacity of Motion in the Muscles by which the Eye is mov'd, and from whence not only the quickness and vivacity of the Eyes, but the very opening of the Eye-lids themselves take their rise; whether there was a Concurrence of these, and many more such Causes which Physicians, and our own Observation may inform us of Blindness, the Men of Curiosity may make what conjectures they will about; but as the Gospel has given us, no Account of this kind, we must leave that as we find it. Certain it is the Man was blind, and blind from his Birth; and it must be suppos'd the Cause was so rooted, and fix'd, that be it what it would, it could be removed by nothing less than a Miracle.

AND as the Case of the Man was so very extraordinary, that nothing but Miracle could bring him to sight, so I believe the Physician will readily agree, there was nothing in the means that us'd that could naturally

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turally or Medicinally produce the effect. The mixture of Clay and Spittle, however efficacious in the Application of our Lord, is what they will easily Conclude is more likely to blind, than give sight to a Man. 'Tis true, there is added to this, the Prescription of the Pool of *Siloam*. A Fountain this as we are told in *Nehemiah* iii. 15. *By the Kings Garden near to the Stairs that go down to the City of David*, but never, as I can find, at all mention'd as having any Medicinal qualities in it. We read indeed of the Pool of *Bethesda* from the same *Evangelist*, that abundance of blind, and other impotent People apply'd to it, on the Account of an Angel at some times moving the Waters of it, by which he that had the happiness of first stepping into it, after it was so troubled, immediately receiv'd an entire Cure, whatever his Disease was. But this was not the Pool our Lord bids the Man to wash in, and so far was his method of proceeding from any thing like what had been done before, tho' never so Miraculously, as no doubt was the Case of the Pool of *Bethesda*, that when he saw an infirm Man who had waited eight and thirty years for the benefit of the Pool without ever being able to accomplish his desire, he makes the Man whole without ever so much as mentioning the Pool to him, and that only with these Words; *Rise, Joh. v. 8. take up thy Bed, and walk*. Whether therefore we consider the Nature of the Miracle itself, with all its Concomitant Circumstances, or the manner in which our Lord perform'd it, in which he seems condescendingly to put on it the appearance of a Physical Operation, and thereby manifestly as it were declines the Pomp at least of the shewing the Divine Power by which no doubt he acted; certainly we cannot but from the whole Conclude with the Poor Man on whom the Miracle was effected, that nothing less than the immediate Power of Almighty God could have

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have done an act so surprizing, and out of the reach of humane Art or Power.

BUT should it be thought, because our Saviour mention'd the Pool of *Siloam*, and made use of Clay and Spittle, in bringing the Man to his sight, that there were some secret Medicinal ingredients mix'd up therewith, that might naturally enough procure the Man his sight only in a Physical way, the Gospel gives us several Accounts of the Blind being brought to their sight with only a touch. Thus the two blind Men who are said to follow our Lord, where *Mat. ix.* it is only said, *Then touch'd he their Eyes, saying, According to your Faith, be it unto you; and their Eyes were opened.* So of the two blind Men sitting by the way side, as our Lord departed from *Jericho*, it is said, *That he had Compassion on them, and touch'd their Eyes, and immediately their Eyes receiv'd sight, and they follow'd him.* Whatever virtue therefore might be suppos'd to be in the Pool of *Siloam*, or Clay and Spittle; yet barely touching a Man can by no Physical Conjectures be productive of such Wonderful effects; and in all such Instances, not only the Matter of Fact, but the manner of performing irresistably speak the Divine Power, by which the Miracle is Perform'd.

BUT in the Case of Blind *Bartimæus*, recorded by the *Evangelist St. Mark* chap. iii. we are able to advance yet further still. In the Account given of his receiving his sight, our Lord is not said so much as to touch him, but only said, *Go thy way, thy Faith hath made thee whole; and immediately he receiv'd his sight.* Whatever Power may be attributed to the Arts of the Physician, and the secret Virtues of Medicine; yet bare speaking, without any other Application,

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Application, cannot sure be thought by the most extensive ways of Conjecture, to come up to any thing like what is in the plainest and most intelligible manner recorded in the Gospel; the Consequence therefore must be undeniable, that the Works which our Saviour did, particularly those of giving the Blind their sight, were demonstrative Proofs of the Divine Authority by which he acted, and Consequently Proofs of the Divinity of that Gospel which he deliver'd, and we hold our selves bound to believe.

THE Second thing our Blessed Lord insisted on, as a Proof of the truth of his Messiahship to the Disciples of St. *John* the Baptist, was, *that the Lamē walk.* Many are the Instances of this kind to be produc'd in the History of the Gospel, as they stand blended, and mixed with the Cure of several other Diseases. But as there are two of this kind in which it is more remarkable, and particular than in others, what we would observe, shall be fetch'd from them.

THE first of these we before slightly mention'd, in the miraculous cure of the Poor Man, who had waited so long at the Pool of *Bethesda*. † The History of the Fact, as Recorded by the *Evangelist St. John*,
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† It is observ'd by Doctor *Lightfoot*, that the Salutary Nature of this Pool is no where mention'd, either by *Josephus*, or any of the Talmudical Writings: And as his very Name speaks the most extensive Study, and Reading of that kind: so it were the highest folly to attempt any discoveries where he has fail'd. As in his Opinion its supernatural effects had not been long before our Saviour's appearance; so it is not
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is this. There was at *Jerusalem* by the Sheep Market a Pool, so very remarkable for its Salutory qualities, that it was constantly attended by a Multitude of Impotent and infirm People, who resorted there in order to the Cure of their Maladies. Their Custom was to wait for the moving and troubling of the

irrationally conjectur'd its healing qualities were a presage thereof. If so, it is no wonder the envy and malice of the *Jews* stifled all mention thereof in their Writings, as it is apparent *Josephus* has several other notorious and publick matters of fact mention'd in the Gospel. Tho' he is exceeding Copious on the Cruelties of *Herod* the Great, (for by that Name he is distinguish'd by him from his Successors) yet he makes no mention of the Massacre of the Children, which as it was a matter of fact must needs have struck his Notice, when he was writing the History of that time, and was so fully deliver'd by the Gospel, his silence therein can in reason be imputed to nothing else, but an unwillingness to confirm any of the History of the Gospel. Had the matter of fact been false, nothing had been more easie than for him to have detected it; but as it was true, his silence was the best expedient he could possibly use, when he had rather a mind to Complement *Vespasian* himself with being the promis'd Messiah, than our Blessed Lord who truly was so, and for whose Destruction so many Children were Butcher'd.

THE Gate by which the Pool of *Bethesda* is said to be, is thought by that Learned Man to be on the South East side of the City, and the Pool it self that which was called *Solomon's* Pool. The source and main Spring from whence it was supply'd, was *Siloam*, which was the same as it call'd *Gihon* in other places of holy Writ. The five Porches that led to it, were Cloisters according to the five Angles that were to the Pool. He that would see throughly the Reasons on which this Great Man in these Studies Grounds his Opinion, may be largely entertain'd that way in the Harmony of the *Evangelists* Part the third, Pag. 668.

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the Waters, which was frequently effected by a Divine and unseen hand. The nature and quality of this Pool was such, that he who was so happy, either of himself, or by the help of his Friends, to step first into it after the disturbance of the Water, immediately receiv'd a perfect Cure of the Disease he labour'd under, of what kind soever it was. Our Blessed Lord going at this time to *Jerusalem* at one of the Festivals, finds a poor Man among many others, who had been afflicted with an infirmity eight and thirty years, lying in one of the Porches that led to the Pool in hopes of the Benefit thereof. Seeing him lie there, and knowing probably by his Divine Wisdom (for it does not appear he had ever seen the Man before) that he had labour'd under his affliction a great while, and had been still disappointed of his expectation, he addresses himself to him in these Words, *Wilt thou be made whole?* The poor Man having waited there a considerable time for that end, answers him, *Sir, I have no Man, when the Water is troubled, to put me into the Pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.* Our Lord Compassionately considering the unhappiness of the Man, exerts his Divine Power upon this occasion, and with the Majesty and Power of the God-head, bids him *Rise, take up thy Bed and Walk.* Immediately hereupon he receives sufficient strength, and vigour in his Limbs to do so, and takes up his Bed in obedience to his Commands.

THE *Jews*, ever full of envy, and spight against our Lord, and his Miracles, expostulate with the Man for a Breach of the Sabbath, (for on that day our Lord restored him to the use of his Limbs) and captiously tell him, it was not lawful for him to carry his Bed on the Sabbath Day. The elated Creature,

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thinking himself sufficiently Justify'd by the Authority of our Lord's Command, tells them, *He that made me whole, the same said unto me, take up thy Bed and Walk.* The *Jews*, thinking they had now a good opportunity of venting their Malice against our Lord, as a breaker of the Sabbath, impetuously ask the Man *who it was that had order'd him so to do?* The Man, either through the Joy and Surprise of his Cure, having not taken much notice of our Lord, or perhaps having never seen him before, and he by the vast Concourse of the People having easily convey'd himself out of his sight, was unable to give them any answer in this particular; but our Lord finding him soon after in the Temple, says to him, *Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee;* The Man having by this, and probably some enquiries fully satisfied himself who our Lord was, goes honestly to the *Jews*, and tells them, *it was Jesus who had made him whole.* chap. v.

WE have in the Account of this Miracle, that Convincing Evidence, as put it out of the reach of all Possibility of Imposture. The Impotency of the Man, of so long a Continuance, that it could not but be known to Multitudes: His cure so publick, and open, that the Witnesses thereof must be equally numerous; most of them so little inclin'd to our Lord, that they would have catch'd at any opportunity to have prov'd, and detected any thing like Fraud or Deceit in the Case. What was done, was not privately transacted in a Corner, and so the account handed to them by Relation only, but they saw it with their own Eyes, and were forc'd to believe it, even against their Wills. Should any have pretended to dispute the matter of fact, either that the Man had been long lame, or that he was perfectly

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ly restored to his Limbs, they must not only have fac'd down the Senses of all about them, but their own. The utmost Invention therefore of Malice it self, was only to give it a wrong turn; and if they are resolv'd, on the account of these and many other such supernatural Works of our Lord, to persecute and destroy him, the pretence must be a Reverence for the Sabbath, and because he had broken that.

THERE is not any thing in Humane Nature, in which we place a greater Confidence, than that of seeing a fact done with our own Eyes. When the Evidence given is of this sort, 'tis not properly Incredulity, but Madness, and Stupidity to dispute. Of all Witnesses the Eye-Witness is the strongest, and carries with it a greater certainty, than that of any other kind. We are not wanting of very strong and convictive evidence from what we feel, or hear, and the like; but still what we see, we deem to bear the preference to them all. And this is the evidence given to the truth of this Miracle. 'Twas seen, not by one, nor two, but by a Multitude, consequently there could not be any thing of Deception as to the matter of fact.

THE extraordinary and supernatural Power that appear'd in the fact it self, is as plain as the Evidence given for the truth of it. A Man who had been eight and thirty years a Cripple, to be brought to that strength, and vigour, only by a word speaking, without any other Application, as to be able to rise, and walk, and take up his Bed and carry it along with him, surely could be owing to nothing less than that Divine Power which first put every thing in motion. Whatever Causes may be enumerated by the Physician, or the Anatomist for Lameness,

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and whatever Remedies may be prescrib'd by them to take off that numbness, and contraction of the Joints and Sinews, which generally is found in such unhappy Persons, bare speaking sure will not be pretended to be found among any of the Receipts: And as the long continuance of the poor Man's misfortune in the present Case will, I believe, be allow'd probably to be exceed all endeavours of the Ablest in this Profession; so it is very Certain our Lord made use of nothing that had so much as the appearance of Art. Such was very often the evidence of immediate Divine Power our Lord shew'd in the manner of performing his Miracles; so remarkably were they distinguish'd this way from every thing of the same kind which was effected barely by humane Art; that were nothing in the thing done in it self unusual to the Course of Nature, and the proper Application of Medicines; yet that alone would sufficiently prove the Miracle.

WE do not indeed find the Case of this poor Man under such a strict and nice Examination, as was that of the Blind Man mention'd before; and perhaps the very ill success our Lord's Enemies had frequently found by such Enquiries, might discourage them from it; but their envy, and malice is still the same. If they cannot lessen the Miracle, they are resolv'd to attempt detracting from the Reputation of him that did it; and tho' they cannot, they are ashamed, so to give the Lye to their own Senses, as to call him an Impostor, and Pretender to the cure he had effected: Yet they Reproach him as a Sabbath-Breaker, and Profaner of the Law.

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HE must know very little of Humane Nature, who hath not observ'd the exceeding Sagacity of Malice : Against our Blessed Lord it was levell'd in the Quintessence. Had there been therefore any thing either in the matter of fact it self, or the manner of doing it, that could have given any the least, or but so much as the appearance of Room for exception, and Cavil, we should certainly some way or other have heard of it from several, who were Eye-witnesses of this whole Transaction. The silence of the Gospel could not have conceal'd any thing of this Nature, nor the Decease of the Persons who detected the Fraud ; for as there were Enemies enough at first, both to our Lord and his Doctrines, to have hugg'd and cherish'd the story, so no Age since, but has produc'd abundance who would have been fond of making the Tradition, (had it at first been barely Oral) Eternal. But as nothing of this kind has been pretended at any time by the *Jews*, *Pagans*, or, which are worse Enemies still of Christianity, Modern Infidels, either with regard to the nature of any of the Miracles themselves, notwithstanding they are Recorded by the Gospel to be almost innumerable, and done too in the most publick way, or the manner in which they are said to be done ; I say, as nothing of this is denied in any one Instance, it must at least amount to a moral Certainty, that they actually were both as to matter and form done, as the Gospel represents them.

BESIDES this Instance of the Miraculous Cure of Lameness, in the Case of the Poor Cripple who waited at the Pool of *Bethesda*, the *Evangelist St. Mark* gives us another account, that may be not improperly observ'd on this occasion. The Narrative is

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this. Our Blessed Lord having, as was Customary with him, enter'd the Synagogue on a Sabbath Day, finds among many others there Assembled, a Man that had a wither'd hand. Commiserating hereupon the unhappiness of his Condition, and having entertain'd in his mind some gracious purposes of relieving him, he speaks to the Man, and bids him *Stand forth*. Alarm'd with this Authoritative way of our Lord's expressing himself, and probably apprehensive of his design to restore the Man the use of his hand, the Malice of his Enemies flatters them with a mighty Advantage, and sufficient foundation given them for a heinous Accusation against him, for healing the Man on the Sabbath Day. Appriz'd by his Almighty Wisdom of this strange Perverseness, and hardness of their hearts, our Lord calmly expostulates the matter with them, and prefaces the Miracle he design'd with the most forcible and Convincing Argument, to bring them to a better Temper. *Is it, says he, lawful to do good on the Sabbath Day, or to do evil? To save Life, or to Kill?* Confounded with the force and irresistible Conviction of these questions, they make them no other returns than fullen and dogged silence, and speaking not one Word. At this our Lord turning about, and looking on them with a Mein that spoke the quickest sense of Grief, and Anger at the Malice, and Wickedness of their hearts, he next applies himself to the Man, and bids him *Stretch out his hand*. The Man immediately obeying the Command, as immediately found his hand restor'd to his use, and however wither'd, and shrunk up before, now as sound, and whole as the other. *Mark iii.*

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WE have, in the Evidence given for the truth of the Relation, such Circumstances, as render it impossible to be false. The whole transaction was Publick, and done in the presence of a Multitude. All that were in the Synagogue, were, or might be Eye-Witnesses of it. Some of them perhaps might be Friends to our Lord, but this we are very sure of, the most part were his Enemies, at least the leading Men among them. The matter of fact, either as it relates to the Miracle, or the Man's hand being wither'd before, was impossible to be Counterfeited, and the means us'd by our Lord for his Cure, was only a Word of Command. Nothing like Nature, or the common Operations of Art or Physick, were made use of, nor is there any one Circumstance from first to last in the whole History, but what speaks it a Miracle.

AMONG the several sorts of Lameness, I believe we might venture to assure our selves of the suffrage of those whose Profession leads them to the nicest Disquisitions of this kind, none is more incurable than that which results from a Limb that is wither'd. In this Case the proper springs and causes of motion and activity, seem totally destroy'd; and when a Limb thus dry'd and numb'd with stupidity, is reduc'd to a Capacity of performing its proper Offices, it seems not so properly a Restoration, which is the utmost Medicine pretends to, as a Creating the Parts of it a new. The truth and reality of the Miracle in the Case before us, is not more apparent, and Conspicuous in its other Circumstances, than it is from the Nature of the thing it self, as it was a bringing a Man to the use of his Limb which was Lamē, and before intirely useles; but as that Lameness was caus'd

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by the Limbs being wither'd, and dry'd up, so as to be wholly void of that radical moisture and warmth, which is absolutely necessary to the being of such a thing as either Life or Motion.

A THIRD Proof insisted on by our Lord to the Disciples of St. *John* Baptist, of the truth of his Messiahship, and Consequently of the Revelation he made to the World, was, that the *Lepers were Cleansed*.

MANY are the Facts of this kind to be found in the Gospel; among others we have an Account given by the *Evangelist* St. *Matthew*, chap. viii. Our Blessed Lord having finish'd his Divine Sermon on the Mount; and being follow'd from thence by a great Multitude of People, in the midst of the Crowd, finds a Leper prostrate before him, Worshipping him, and with a modest confidence telling him, *if he would, he could make him clean*. Whether the poor Man before this had been an Eye-witness of any of our Lords Miracles, or had grounded this his assurance only on the Fame he had heard of him, or Lastly, whether the greatness of his Faith was the effect of an extraordinary, and Divine Impulse, as the Gospel is entirely silent therein, we too must leave it to the several Conjectures of the Curious to determine. Thus much is very certain, his request was immediately comply'd with by our Lord, who put forth his hand and touched him saying, *I will; be thou Clean*. The Consequence of which was, his Leprosie immediately left him, and he was made Clean.

ANOTHER time the *Evangelist* St. *Luke* tells us, as our Lord was going to *Jerusalem*, and pass'd through the midst of *Samaria*, and *Galilee*, as he enter'd

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ter'd into a certain Village, there met him ten Men, who were Lepers. Conscious of their uncleanness, and the Laws of their Country in that Case, they modestly decline making too near approaches toward him; but standing afar off, they all Passionately lift up their Voices, and Cry, *Jesus Master have mercy upon us.* The Goodness and Compassion of our Lord, were presently mov'd with this solemn Address; hereupon therefore immediately resolving their Cure, he Commands them to go shew themselves to the Priest. This was expressly exacted by the Law of *Moses*, from all who had at any time been Leprous, tho' the disease had actually left them, before they could be accepted as clean Persons. The whole of the Sacrifices, and Offerings, injoyn'd on these occasions, may be seen in *Leviticus*, chap. xiv. In Compliance therefore with this, our Blessed Lord, after the Cure both of the single, Person before-mention'd, and these ten Lepers, send's them to the Priests to perform such Rites as *Moses* had Commanded. The expectation they had of Relief from our Lord, made them very far from disputing his Commands; they go therefore immediately, and find the reward of their Faith and Obedience themselves, as they past entirely made Clean, and the Leprosie to have left them. It is surprising, after such apparent Miracle in their Cure, any of them could be so wanting in Sense and Gratitude, as not to reflect on the kind Benefactor who had made them whole; but so it was, the Cure it seems was forgotten, as soon as wrought and tho' there were ten Lepers Cleaned, but one return'd back either to thank his Physician, or give Glory to God. This honest wretch, finding the Leprosie to have left him, and himself to be Clean and Sound, leaving his Companions to their own Stupidity, turns back, and with a heart full of the
Sense

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Sense of the Mercy he enjoy'd, and a Tongue big with the grateful Praises of God, fills the Air with the Eccho's of his Joy and Gratitude, and falling down on his face at the feet of our Lord, at once makes him the sincerest returns of thanks for his Goodness, and proclaims the Miracle to all the World.

O U R Lord, pleas'd with the Honesty, and Gratitude of the Man, answers him with observing, how much he took notice of his having so well distinguish'd himself from his fellow Lepers, and therefore, with that Goodness, and Sweetness which flow'd from all his Words, he replies to the Man, and those about him, *were there not ten Cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found, that returned Glory to God, save this Stranger.* Then meekly addressing himself more immediately to the Man, he bids *Luke xvii.* him *Arise, go his way, his Faith had made him whole.*

T H E Matter of the Miracle, with the manner of our Lord's effecting it, carries in the bare Relation, such convincing evidence of the Divine Power by which he acted, as leaves no Room either for the Physician, or the nicest Reasoner to Cavil at. However the Disease of Leprosie may come under the skill, and practice of the former, and the Cure and Ejection of the Malady may be accounted for by the nice Disquisitions of the Later: Yet nothing of that Nature can be Concluded from any part of our Lord's proceeding. In the first Instance he only touched the Man, and in the other only spoke to them. Applications of this kind will not sure be contended, productive of such effects, and in all the secrets of Nature, such experiments were never known: Yet these were all that were used; and if then this cannot be called

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called Miracle, they that say so, would do well to tell us, what they themselves would call so.

I ENTER not here, into Negative Arguments, the impossibility of either feigning Leprosie, or the Cure of it. What has been before observ'd of this kind, will find the most easie, and natural Application in the Cases before us. The bare Relation given by the Gospel of all our Saviour's Miracles, will of it self furnish the meanest observer with abundance of that kind, and as they who were present at our Lord's performing of them, needed nothing but the evidence, and Certainty of their own Eyes, to be Convinc'd of the reality, and truth of them; So we that read the accounts of them at this distance, need nothing but the same evidence to be convinc'd, there could not be any thing like fallacy, and Imposture in them. If they who were Eye-Witnesses of the Facts, could be deceiv'd, so might we in the same Case, and then let us no longer pretend to say, that seeing is believing, and Arraign the Justice of all the World, for Concluding the most important Cases, upon such Insufficient evidence.

IN the Instance of making the Deaf to hear, the fourth proof mention'd by our Lord to the Disciples of the Baptist, *St. Mark* gives us this account. Our Lord departing from the Coasts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, came to the Sea of *Galilee*, through the midst of the Coasts of *Decapolis*: Where was brought to him a Man that was Deaf, and had an Impediment in his Speech. The Persons who brought the Man to our Lord, apply themselves to him in the most submissive manner, and beseech him to put his hand upon him, in order to his Cure. The Blessed Jesus, whose Goodness was always ready to Acts of beneficence and kindness, upon this Address, takes the Man aside from the
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Multitude, and putting his fingers into his Ears, he spit and touch'd his Tongue. After this earnestly looking up to Heaven, he sigh'd, and said unto the Man, *Epphatha*, that is, *be opened*. No sooner were these Words come out of his mouth, but immediately, not only his Ears were opened, and perfectly blessed with the faculty of hearing, but the string of his Tongue too was loosed, which by its previous Straitness caused a Stammering, and great imperfection in his Speech, and he spake plain, *Mark vii.*

THE Witnesses here of the Miracle, were (as was usual to every thing our Lord did of this kind) a Multitude, who tho' they were indeed beyond measure astonish'd at the sight of the Miracle: Yet none of them pretend in the least to dispute it. The whole procedure was too publick, and notorious to the Senses of all present, to give any shadow for Cavil, and such was the Conclusion they could not help making from the whole Transaction, that they were almost irresistably led to say, *he hath done all things well, he maketh both the Deaf to hear; and the Dumb to speak.*

I HAVE not observ'd any other particular Instances in which our Blessed Lord exerted his miraculous power in the Case of Deafness, except this single one. The mention of it may frequently occur, as it stands among many, the more General Accounts of his Cures, where Multitudes of Diseases, as well as Persons, are said to be healed by him; but any other particular on the most careful examination, I cannot find in the History of the Gospel. This alone however is sufficient to the purpose it is produc'd for, and proves so far to be in our Lord the true

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true marks of the Promis'd Messiah, as among other things foretold of him, it was said he was to make the Deaf to hear.

THE Last thing insisted by our Lord, as a proof of the Truth of his Messiahship, was, that the *Dead were Raised*.

TO raise the Dead, is so immediately the Act of Divine Power, that nothing below it can ever effect it. 'Tis true in the Case of the Ghost of *Samuel* appearing to *Saul*, we have something like this imitated by the Devil; but as there was nothing in that whole proceeding, but illusion and cheat, it abundantly proves how much any real matter of fact of that Nature is out of even his Power. The quickness and intelligence of the Fiend's nature being still in several Instances retain'd even since his fall, and the consequent superior knowledge he must therefore have of the secrets of Nature, and their several Medicinal qualities and force, may, and no doubt very often have, by the permission of God, enabl'd him to do many things very surprizing, and what humane reason with all its searches cannot Account for; but as the Union between Soul and Body was at first made, and fix'd by only God himself; so whenever a Separation of these happens, which is what we call Death, no power less than that which first joyn'd them, can ever reunite them. When Instances of this sort are propos'd to us, there seems nothing else necessary to our inquiry, but the matter of fact it self, and when that appears to be plain and indisputable, we know it can be owing to nothing less than what is truly, and properly call'd Divine Power.

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OF this kind then we shall produce two Instances, recorded by the *Evangelists* St. *Luke*, and St. *John*; That of St. *Luke* is the raising from Death the Widow of *Nain's* Son. The History of it is this. Our Lord with many of his Disciples, and a vast concourse of People being a going to enter the Gate of a City in *Galilee*, called *Nain*, Scituate on that side of *Kison*, which falleth into the Sea of *Galilee*, and very near advanc'd in his approaches thereto, is met by a Widow, and many of the Inhabitants of the City with her, attending the Corps of her only Son to its Burial. The Grief and Agony the poor Woman shew'd for the greatness of her Loss, struck our Lord so, as to Compassionate her Case, and resolve at the expence of a Miracle to put an end to her Sorrows. Hereupon coming up to the Woman, he bids her *Weep not*. After this, having caus'd the Bearers of the Corps to stop, he touched the Bier, or Coffin, and said, *Young Man, I say unto thee arise*. Immediately upon this the Youth who was Dead sat up, and began to speak, and was deliver'd by our Lord to his Mother. As the whole procedure in the Miracle abundantly evidenc'd the Divine Power by which it was effected: So the numerous Spectators were all of them struck with the utmost Awe and Reverence, filling the Air with the Praises of God, and Concluding with regard to our Lord, that he was a great Prophet risen among them, and that God had by him in a very extraordinary manner visited his People. The Fame of this Miracle being spread all over *Judea*, and the Regions Contiguous thereto, among others, the Disciples of St. *John* Baptist acquaint him with it; whereupon he sends two of his Disciples to know from him the Truth of his Messiahship; not that he had any doubt thereof himself, his

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own Testimony concerning him sufficiently showing the Contrary of that, but to give our Lord a thorough opportunity to make a full discovery of himself; which he immediately did, for the Sacred History tells us that, that same hour he cured many of their Infirmities, Plagues, evil Spirits, and to many that were Blind gave Sight, giving these his Miraculous Instances of his Power, for the Answer to their Question; *Luke vii.* Whether he was truly the Messiah or no.

THE Second Instance of this kind, is related by *St. John*, in the raising of *Lazarus* from the Dead. This Man was one whom we find our Lord had a more than common esteem for; and therefore find him apply'd to by his two Sisters, *Mary*, and *Martha*, in the time of his Sickness in order to his Relief. When our Lord had had the Message of his illness fully deliver'd to him, his Answer was, *his Sickness was not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God might be Glorify'd thereby*; and notwithstanding their account, who brought him the news, continu'd still two days longer in the same place where he was, when it first was brought to him. After the expiration hereof, he proposes to his Disciples to go to *Judea* again. Upon this they remind him of the ill treatment they had lately receiv'd there, and the outrageous attempt they had made to Stone him. Having made a short reply to this, he observes to them, *that their Friend Lazarus then Slept, but he was going to awake him.* His Disciples mistaking his meaning, and thinking he spake of his being in an agreeable Repose, which might be of Considerable Service, and Refreshment to him in his Indisposition, make the Conclusion which was natural to such a thought that then he might probably recover. Our Lord hereupon calmly corrects their Mistake, and

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and tells them plainly, that *Lazarus* was Dead; adding that he was Glad for their sakes, he was not present before he expired; because they might thereby have such thorough Conviction of his Divine Power, that hereafter they should have no doubt thereof, and then proposes to go to him. After this, and the Affectionate reply of *Thomas*, otherwise called *Didymus*, to his fellow Disciples, our Lord went with them to *Bethany* where *Lazarus* lay Dead. When they were come there, they found he had been Dead four Days: However *Martha*, one of his Sisters hearing of our Lord's coming, leaving her Sister, to be Condol'd by those Friends who were assembled to that purpose, goes out to meet him. Being come up to him, she passionately observes to him, *that had he been present, her Brother had not died; and as it was, she knew whatever he should request of God in his favour, would be granted.* Our Lord immediately hereupon assures her, her Brother should rise again from the Dead; which she taking as only meant by him to relate to the general Resurrection at the Last-Day, he took occasion to assure her it was both in his Intention, and Power to raise him even at that time. Elated with the Joy and full expectation of this Promise, she immediately precipitates to her Sister, telling her of our Lord's being come, and of his wanting to speak with her. *Mary* having heard the whisper, arises with the utmost readiness to obey his Commands, and came to him at the place where her Sister had left him without the Town, and where he still was.

THEY who were then present with her, in order to Comfort her on the mournful occasion, thinking she was gone in a start of Passion, to give a yet further loose to her sorrow over her Brother's Grave, thought

thought it proper to follow her, to prevent such extravagancies as the Transports of her Grief might expose her to. *Mary* however pursuing her steps to the place where our Lord was, falling down at his Feet, gives no other exercise to the zeal of her Friends, than that of Joyning with her in the sad Consort of their Tears. Our Blessed Lord being thus incircled with the frailties of humane Nature, and being himself susceptible of the Tenderneſſes of it, at the assault of this mournful ſcene of *Mary*, and her Friends, finds himſelf exceedingly mov'd, and after he had ask'd her *where ſhe had laid him* ? diſſolv'd into Tears, and Wept. †

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† THERE is not perhaps any one Historical Part of the Gospel, that gives greater Difficulties to the Commentators, than the exceeding concern our Blessed Lord shew'd on this occasion. He being repeatedly said to groan, and be so sensibly afflicted, when it was so immediately in his purpose to raise up the Deceas'd from the Grave, cannot, I think, be resolv'd into any thing that related to his Death. Neither can I think what the *Jews* thought to be the reason of it, the great affection he had for *Lazarus*, is sufficient to account for it. For as there was nothing but Mercy, and Goodness intended to him, as well as a manifest design to evidence Christ's Power and Glory: So the honour that must necessarily redound to him in being so eminently distinguish'd by our Lord, by so surprizing a Miracle, will not admit of any Construction but that the whole proceeding was design'd in his Favour. They that think it might grieve our Lord to bring him from a State of Bliss to a fresh Tryal and Encounter with the Wickedness and Misery of this World; seem not to consider there is no greater happiness to the Blessed than to do the will, and obey the Commands of their Creator; and in any way to be so distinguish'd, as in an extraordinary manner to be made the Instruments of his Glory, is undoubtedly all the increase
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THE Company present at this extraordinary interview, were differently impress'd; some conjectur'd our Lord's exceeding Commotion was owing to a great Passion he had for the Deceas'd, and the consequent concern he was under for his Death. Others were taken up with the thoughts of what they had seen our Lord do themselves before, in opening the Eyes of the Blind, and that therefore he might be suppos'd to have been able to have hinder'd the Death of his Friend; all which our Blessed Lord only answer'd with the strongest Emotions of a mind pressed down,

their felicity is capable of. Nor can I resolve this Agony of our Lord into barely the force of Sympathy, and being mov'd by the concern of those about him; for tho' I can readily believe him touchable in Humane Nature by every soft, and good natur'd Sense thereof; yet I cannot but think so uncommon a sorrow, flow'd from higher Reasons, than can be fetch'd from bare Example. He is said to Weep over *Jerusalem*, and the reason of his so doing may not improperly be apply'd in this Case; His Tears there were owing to the reflection on what had been done formerly for its wretched Inhabitants, and the prescience he had of those Calamities that would come upon them for their horrid impiety, and unbelief: This might be the Case here; the raising of *Lazarus* from the Dead, he knew would have no other effect on the abominable Malice, and Obstinacy of the chief among the *Jews*, than that of setting them immediately to hunt for, and Plot his Destruction. Returns so barbarous, so ungrateful, to so much Goodness as our Lord always shew'd to these People, might indeed fetch the big drops from his Eyes, and Groans from his Heart. This was indeed piercing him through with many Sorrows; and as the Goodness and Sweetness of his Nature led him to have the most delicate Sense of such outrage, so it would naturally show it self in the most Visible manner. That such was the horrid Abuse the *Jews* made of this Miracle, the History it self will inform us; and then how naturally our Lord's prescience would take in the prospect, we may easily collect.

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down, and sunk with the quickest Sense, Grief, and uncommon Sorrow. Groans and Tears was all that was heard and seen from him; and in this Melancholy manner he comes to the Grave it self.

THE Grave where *Lazarus* lay, was a Cave, and a Stone was upon it. Our Lord upon this, bids them take away the Stone. *Martha* the Sister of the Deceased, probably apprehensive that the opening the Mouth of the Cave might send forth such an ungrateful Stench, as might annoy, and distaste both our Lord and all the Company, modestly observes to our Lord, *that by this time the Corps of her Brother must Stink, because he had been dead four days.* To which our Lord Answers, *said I not unto thee, that if thou would'st believe, thou should'st see the Glory of God?* Upon this, the Stone was taken away, and our Lord lifting up his Eyes to Heaven, addresses himself to God in this Prayer. *Father I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou heardest me always; but because of the People that stand by me, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*

HAVING thus spoken, he cry'd with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth!*

LIKE the Almighty *Fiat*, which gave all things their Being; so spoke our Lord, and such was the effect. *Lazarus* immediately revives, the Bands of Death no longer hold him, he comes forth bound in his Grave Clothes, and presents himself to our Lord. Life and Strength, as well as motion, being restored, our Lord bids some of the Company unloose the little incumbrances of his Burial Clothes, and let him go.

THE Consequence of this Stupendious Miracle to many, was the bringing them to a Belief of his being

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the true Messiah; others equally astonish'd, and confounded at what they saw, immediately went to the *Pharisees* to inform them of what had passed. The Alarm the Narrative gave them, with the Apprehensions they had of what it might produce, immediately convenes both them and the chief Priests in Council about it. In their Debates what should be done to hinder the Fame of the Miracle's spreading, *Caiaphas* the then High Priest observes to them by divine impulse, whatever might be his intention in speaking the words, that it was *expedient for them that one Man should dye for the People*, that the whole Nation might not perish. However ignorant they were of the exact agreement of this with the design of our Lord's coming into the World; the proposal is immediately agreed to, and our Lord is pitch'd on for the Man. Nothing now engages their thoughts, but how to secure him, and their next Councils are, how to put him to Death.

OUR Lord hereupon absenting himself, and retiring with his Disciples near to a Wilderness, and the *Jews* Feast of the Passover approaching, they flatter'd themselves of meeting him in the Temple as he came up to the Feast; and to be thoroughly sure of him, made an Ordinance, that if any Man knew where he were, he should shew it, that he might be taken up. *John xi. ult.*

THE Miraculous Power that appears in every Circumstance of these two Transactions, the raising of the Widow's Son, and *Lazarus* from Death, I doubt not the Reader has easily Collected from the History it self, without any Additional Remarks. Nor shall I at all take up these Papers with observing either the Publickness of the Fact, or the Nature and
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Number of the Witnesses, with many such other Considerations which we have had such repeated occasion to mention. But the Assembling together of the *Pharisees*, with *Caiaphas* the High Priest's being present, the Fame of the Miracle's being the occasion of this meeting, and such Resolutions form'd thereupon as afterwards brought our Lord to the Cross: These are such Circumstances, the *Jews* themselves were able to have been Judges of by their own Records, and had there been any thing like Falshood in so much as one Circumstance of the Narrative, they could by this means have been abundantly able to have detected it. For, as it must in Reason be suppos'd, could there have been any thing that carried so much as the shadow of Imposture charg'd upon the Matter of Fact it self, it could no ways have escap'd the knowledge of the Council assembl'd on purpose fully to Canvass, and debate the matter: So had they found any thing of that kind, they would naturally have taken sufficient care to have declar'd this to the World, especially in an Affair in which their Judicial proceeding so necessarily requir'd it: But as no attempt of this kind was ever made by the *Jews*, either to prove the Assembly did publicly explode the Miracle as a Cheat, and that the order of the Council was therefore made to take up our Lord for an Impostor, and Deceiver of the People; or that indeed the High Priest and the *Pharisees* were never at all Assembled upon any such account; which sure they would have done, had it lain in their Power, the Gospel being publickly preach'd to them every day, and amongst many other Matters of Fact, this insisted on even to the Faces of those who were themselves present in the Council; I say, as nothing of this kind was ever pretended to by any of the Enemies of Christianity, *Jew*, or *Gentile*, it must I think from the

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Nature of the thing make every rational Man Conclude, the whole Fact was done, as the Gospel relates it, and the Sanhedrin it self, did at least tacitly acknowledge it.

THEY who are Writers of Fables, and Fictitious and Legendary Accounts, very seldom much busie themselves in mentioning such Circumstances as Time, Place, and Persons of Publick Note, and Character in their Narratives. Any thing of this Nature always proves Dangerous to the Credibility of the Relation, and gives such opportunities of questioning the truth of the Matters of Fact, by comparing them with the Publick Histories of such Times and Persons, as has mov'd the more Cunning Managers of such Stories to be very sparing in their Accounts of such particulars. But this is in none of the instances of our Saviour's Miracles, the Case of the Gospel; Not only the Place where, the Time when, but Persons of the most known and publick Characters, are there mention'd as considerably engag'd both as Eye-witnesses, and very nice examiners of the Facts. The Great Council of the *Jews* were not once, but very often assembled on this occasion. We have in the Instances here mention'd (which were not probably the ten thousandth part of the Miracles our Saviour did) an Account of their being Assembled twice, with the decrees that they pass'd in the Case of the Man that was Born blind, and the Resurrection of *Lazarus*; so far were the holy writers of the Gospel from using any thing like Art, and obscurity in their Accounts, that they seem to court the clearest Light; and tho' they wrote, and dispers'd the Gospel, at a time when the Places, and Persons mention'd in it, were very well known; yet they use the utmost openness, and most daring plainness, preaching and insisting on the truth of what they deliver'd in the Face of the Sun.

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I N the Case of *Lazarus* it was not only plain, and universally known that he was rais'd from the Dead, but the Miracle too appear'd afterwards in the permanency of it ; he was resorted to Daily, and seen to eat, and Drink ; and such was the Notoriety of the Fact, that in order to Crush the Speculations of the People about it, the chief Priests thought it necessary not only, that our Lord should be destroy'd, but *Lazarus* too must be put to Death. The Fame of the Miracle was so great, as well as the matter extraordinary, that the very Enemies of our Lord cry, *behold the World is gone after him* ; and such was the Curiosity it had rais'd among all sorts of People, that the very *Greeks* apply to *Philip*, desiring him to help them to the sight of our Lord, chap. xii. And he could not so much as stir, but he was follow'd by Multitudes.

TH U S have I laid before you in the Preceding particulars, such plain Matters of Fact, as abundantly Justify our Lord's appealing to the Works that he did, as a proof of the Divinity of his Mission. As to the Nature of the Facts themselves, with the Credibility of the History that relates them, we have in each of the particulars made some remarks, and shall hereafter have a fuller opportunity of entering into that part of the Argument, when we come to Consider the whole of the Gospel in a more general view. What we would at present debate, is the reasonableness of their pretences who deny the Conclusion our Lord, and we after him draw from these his Miracles, *viz.* That he was therefore truly what he pretended to be, the Messiah, or a Person sent, and particularly appointed by God to declare, and fully reveal his will to the World.

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BOTH *Jews*, and *Pagans* have deny'd this Consequence; and the Reasons they have given for such their denial, may be reduc'd to these three.

FIRST, that the Working of Miracles is not one of the Marks and Characteristicks by which the Messiah was to be known.

SECONDLY, That Miracles may, and have been Work'd by evil Spirits, and the Power of Magick; and very often what are call'd so, is nothing else but the effect of an uncommon knowledge of the Secrets of Nature.

THIRDLY, That both *Moses*, and *Christ* too, caution us against the Delusion of those who pretend to Signs, and Wonders in Confirmation of what they deliver; and therefore what they did themselves of that kind, cannot be justly Concluded from.

THIS I believe will be allow'd to be the whole strength of all that has been said by any of the Enemies to Christianity, against the Argument urg'd by Christians from our Saviour's Miracles; We come now to Consider each of them distinctly in the order they lie before us.

AND first then, as to Miracles being no Mark or Characteristick of the Messiah. This is a dart, flung at our Lord, by some of the Modern *Jewish Rabbins*†; But

† THAT the Messiah, when he came, should do no Miracles at all, is asserted in the Talmud in *Sanhedrin* in the noted

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But that they thought so before his appearing among us, let the Mighty expectations they had of his being to be a great and Triumphant Monarch speak. By what but by the Power of Miracles, could the Messiah in their own Notion have such influence on all the World, as in the Language of the Prophet, to shake all Nations, and meet with no discouragement 'till he had fix'd Judgment upon the Earth, and subjected the most distant Isles to the obedience of his Law? What less than the Almighty Arm of God could effect a Work like this? And yet thus much their own Creed must lead them to think of the Messiah's Coming; and sure if ever he should come, as they would be thought still to expect him, nothing less than Miracle could gather together a People, so remarkably scatter'd, and vagrant, where ever they are.

IT is very easie therefore to Conclude what motives they have for this subterfuge, and that since the Miracles our Blessed Lord did, are too well attested to be deny'd, this project must be hatch'd to evade their force. They have been too wise, however, to pretend Canonical Scripture for this Doctrine, and if you would know whence they took it, you must Consult their Fables, and run over the Labyrinths of their Talmud, where this will be found nothing to their other fine thoughts about the Messiah since they have been so abandoned to obstinacy, and wretchedly

ted Chapter called *Helek*, where the *Gemarists* speak very much concerning the Messiah, and his coming, and from thence it is produc'd by *Maimony* in *Melachin Cmilchamotb Par. ult.* Vid. Dr. *Lightfoots* Harmony of *Evang.* part iii. pag. 682.

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edly given to Judicial Blindness by denying our Lord to be him.

THE Second reason advanc'd to invalidate the force of our Saviour's Miracles, we have often heard both from *Jews*, and all sorts of Infidels. It may not perhaps come up to the former, in subtilty, and cunning, but it exceeds it in the blackest Malice, and Rancour. The Instances generally made use of to support the possibility of the thing, are taken from what is said to be done by the Magicians in *Egypt*, in their contest with *Moses*, so far as they are fetch'd from sacred History; and in Profane we have *Æsculapius*, *Apollonius Tyaneus*, *Vespasian*, &c. mention'd to us.

Now tho' in answer to these, it might very easily be observ'd, there was a manifest difference in the very Facts themselves, between what was done by *Moses*, and his Competitors, as appear'd by the Tests they were put to; yet because it may be thought something difficult, to distinguish between the reality, and bare appearance of things, and Common Sagacity may not very readily discern the difference, it cannot be amiss to mention one Test by which we may be very sure whether the work done is the effect of Divine, or Infernal Power, and that is the end, or purpose for which the Work is done.

IF it proceeds from God, we are infallibly sure the end drove at by it must be good; But if it proceeds either from Diabolical Power, or illusion, the end propos'd by it will always upon examination appear to be evil. This is eternally fix'd and rooted in the Nature, and Reason of things, *for a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit, neither can a good Tree*
naturally

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naturally bring forth evil Fruit. Things of this kind are Contradictions in Nature, and its Course can never be so inverted to deceive us here. Whatever agreement therefore there might appear between *Moses* and his Antagonists in other particulars, here the difference will immediately appear; and there needed no more to be able to distinguish between the Truth of what one propos'd, and the falshood and absurdity of the other, than a capacity to judge between Light and Darkeness.

IN the Works done by our Lord, what an exact Correspondence there was to this Rule, we shall have a large opportunity fully to consider, when we enter into the Nature, and Perfection of those Doctrines he did them to confirm. In the interim, it may not be improper to remark another mark of a true Miracle from the Nature of the Work done it self, which evil Spirits, or their Agents can never have.

AND that is, the Matter of Fact done, is manifestly an Act of Goodness, as well as an Act of Power; some real and substantial Benefit is done by it, and this so visibly that all the World may be Judges; such were the Cures our Lord, you will easily remember, did. To give sight to the Blind, strength to the lame, hearing to the deaf, and soundness, and health to every sort of the Diseased; these were the Instances of our Lord's Power; in which not only Divine Power, but goodness was shown. The Malice, and Rancour of evil Spirits can never show it self in such effects as these, and the most extensive permissions of God Almighty, have not in any Instances let them show such a Power. For wise purposes they have been suffer'd to Ape the Omnipotence of
God,

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God, but never his Goodness ; and we might Challenge the most sagacious Enemy of Christianity to produce one Instance of this kind. The Devil indeed by the permission of God, was instrumental to the Inflicting Diseases in the Case of *Job* ; and this was a Part very well suited with his Nature ; but where he has shown the Power of Curing Diseases, no Credible History gives us any Account. It may be thought perhaps the Instances of *Æsculapius*, *Apolonius*, *Vespasian*, &c. may be insisted on in this Case ; but as the Credibility of what is related of them is but poorly attested, so the Account given by even the Writers of these things themselves is so extremely idle, and ridiculous, that a rational and discerning Man would be really ashamed to mention them.

For the First * of these, we have all the Account as ever I could learn, from the venerable Authority of the Ancient Poets. It is stuffed by them with such extravagant Fiction and Nonsense, that the relating it from them, would appear rather a Satyr against, than any Advantage to the Cause it is brought for. However the curious may see underneath what was pretended of him, but so uncertain are the Accounts of his Cures, that there is reason to suspect whether there ever was such a Person ; and 'till better Accounts can be fix'd to their Chronology than that of

* *Æsculapius* is said by the Poets to be the Son of *Apollo*, begat by him on the Nymph *Coronis*. Her Father King *Pblegyas* not knowing of her Conceiving, was carrying her with him to *Peloponnesus*, when she was brought to bed at the Confines of the *Epidaurians* in *Scalavonia*. The Child was exposed upon a Mountain called afterwards *Titbias*, from
nourish-

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of a thousand years difference, as may be seen in the exactest part of the History, his Miracles must appear as Fictitious and Romantick, as the other parts of his Character.

THEY that mention what is said to be done by *Æsculapius* in opposition to the Miracles of our Lord, cannot sure imagin, what is purely the Birth of Fancy, and a fruitful Invention, is to be plac'd upon the same foot, as clear, and Credible History. This were to give up all the Marks, and Characters of Truth and Fallhood, and to make no difference between the Impudence, and Invention of the most palpable Impostor, and the Testimony of the most Authentick,

nourishing of him. Here they tell you a She-Goat came to suckle him, attended by a Bitch, which is said likewise to have afforded her Assistance. A shepherd missing both this Goat, and Bitch, after searching his Pastures around, found them, with the Infant, who seeing a sort of Glory, or fiery Rays round his head, makes him immediately Conclude his Divinity, and alarm all his Neighbours to be the Spectators of it. The result of their Inspection was, he was the Son of *Apollo*, and many who had different Diseases resorting to him, his first Cures were upon *Ascles* King of *Epidaurus*, and *Aunes* King of *Daunia*, who was troubled with sore Eyes.

OTHERS relate the Story thus. *Coronis* being with Child by *Apollo*, lay with *Ischys* the Son of *Elatus*, upon which *Diana* slew her to revenge her Brother's disgrace; but as she was upon the Funeral Pile *Mercury*, or rather *Phæbus* himself preserv'd the Child out of the Ashes, and gave him to one *Trigo* to Nurse. Afterwards he receiv'd his Education from *Chiron*, and by hunting with *Diana* in the Woods, learn'd the Nature, and use of Simples, with the best Methods of using them. In the Progress of his life, he is said to arrive to that skill in Physick, as to raise many from the Dead.

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Authentick, and Credible Witness upon Earth. He that argues at this rate, may perhaps value himself on the strength of his wit, but as long as there is such a thing as Reason, nay, Common Sense in the World, it will not sure entertain the greatest opinion of his understanding.

THE Second Worker of Miracles put up against our Saviour, *Apollonius*, is to me more surprizing than what has been observ'd of *Æsculapius*. I must own the Account given us of his Life by *Philostratus* contains in it something less of the Appearance of Fable, but then I can't imagin in what part of it they place his Miracles. Does it lye in the Flash of Lightning that is said to be at his Birth, or the Egyptian God *Proteus* directing his Mother to go to a Plain to be deliver'd of him; or his fine Observations on the Lions, that being ript up had eight Whelps in her Belly? These, upon the utmost search I have been

Dead. The wonders he did of this kind, make *Pluto* to complain to *Jupiter*, that the number of the Dead decreas'd, and *Æsculapius* weaken'd his Empire; at which *Jupiter* was so incens'd, that he slew him with his Thunder Bolts, and *Apollo* in return slew the *Cyclops* that forg'd them.

Cicero says *Æsculapius*, and several other Deities were taken into the number of the Gods, for the Benefits they had done to Mankind. Historians differ exceedingly from all these Accounts, and tell us he was an Egyptian, and reign'd at *Memphis*, above a thousand Years before the *Æsculapius* of the Grecians was born. And *Cicero* himself, reckons up several of the Name, the first, the Son of *Apollo* worshipp'd by the *Arcadians*, who found out the use of the Probe, and Bandages for Wounds; the second, the Brother of *Mercury*, who was struck with Thunder, and buried at *Cynosura*; the third, the Son of *Arsippus* and *Arsinoe*, who found out the Art of Tooth-drawing, and purging. *Vid. Dr. Kings* Account of the Heathen Gods.

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been able to make throughout the whole Narrative, are the greatest matters of fact; that are related of him, and all this I could easily believe to be true, only allowing the Story of *Proteus* to be one of his Mother's Dreams, and yet see nothing like Miracle in it. I find it indeed mention'd in the Account of his Life, that he was a *Magician*, and that he was pretty warmly accus'd by his Countrymen the *Tyrians* for being so. The reasons given for this, were the Predictions he made of future Events; but as to any Matters of Fact enumerated of that kind, I find not one, without it be the Story of the Lioneſs and her Whelps, which for my part I can ſuppoſe to be very true, without concluding him either to deal with the Devil, or his Imps. Nay as to that Story too, it only tells you that the eight Whelps ſignified ſuch, and ſuch things ſhould come to paſs in eight Months, but does not ſay a Word of the Event being agreeable.

THE Narrative I muſt own, gives us many Inſtances of his Wiſdom, and the ſapience of his answers, but all this might be very true without pronouncing the Man a Conjuror; and I can't for my Life help thinking him wrong'd by ſuch an Imputation. *Æſculapius* you find Celebrated for the moſt extraordinary, and Supernatural Works, down from raiſing of the Dead to even drawing of Teeth: But as to *Apolonius*, tho' I have taken the Pains to look over the whole Account of his Life, I do not find one Cure that is ſaid to be done by him, nor really any thing elſe conſiderable in him, but the Noiſe he has made in the World.

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IT gives me therefore the greatest surprize to find this Man mention'd by some of the most Learned antient Enemies to Christianity, as Parallel with our Lord ; when upon whatever I have been able to observe from the Account we have of his Life, there is not so much as any one thing said to be done by him, that looks like Miracle, or Magick either. I cannot say I have read over every page that is written of his Life, but I have been pretty near that, and I can be so particular as to assure you, I have carefully read over the Contents of every Chapter in the whole Work, and what I have mention'd, is all that to me can be thought to look like any thing extraordinary, and out of the Common Course of things. You have I can assure you, no blind Men that are said to be restored to sight, no dumb that speak, nor any thing beyond the Common advice of the Physician to live regularly, to one whom the Story tells you the God *Æsculapius* himself sent to *Apollonius*, in order to be directed by him. Not having the Book now by me, I cannot refer you to particular Chapters, but they who are able to recur to the Book, will easily satisfy themselves herein, and wonder with me, what should induce any Learned Man to mention him upon such an Occasion.

As to what is said of *Vespasian*, it must I think be believ'd by them who have mention'd it, there is very little worth minding. The whole Story is palpable Adulation, and Flattery, and so badly Circumstantiated, that it needs nothing but the bare † Relation to make it

† *Vespasian* we are told by *Dion* in the summit of his Glory is address'd by a blind and lame man of mean Condition

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it appear ridiculous. No Man could be fuller of his Eulogies on this Prince, than *Josaphus*; but yet this mighty Cure is not so much as mention'd by him. He that could Complement him with the Messiahship, would not sure have omitted this opportunity of Celebrating his Patron, but as he is entirely silent, 'tis easie to guess at the Credibility of the Story. The God that reveal'd himself to them, and the Cure that was effected, were of equal Credibility, and as the one had no other Being than what lay in superstition, and folly, it is very natural to Conclude the other to take its rise only from Flattery and Fiction.

BUT idle and ridiculous as these stories were, they were all the greatest and most Learn'd of the first Enemies of Christianity were able to oppose to the Miracles of our Lord. Their part was not in the least to deny the Matters of Fact, but to rake up every thing they could of this kind to oppose to them; with what success, the meanest Reader will in the Comparison easily determine; and Christianity perhaps in such a disquisition cannot gain more Ground by its own innate force, and Evidence, than the Miserable

tion, who presenting themselves to him as he sat on his Tribunal, beseech'd him most humbly that he would vouchsafe to Cure them, for they had been admonish'd by their God *Serapis* in a Dream, that if he pleas'd but to spit upon the Eyes of one, and but touch the other with his heel, both of them should recover, and be Cured. *Vespasian* doubting much of the success, durst not put it in practice, till being over-ru'd by the importunity of his friend, he try'd both means before the whole Assembly, and found the Persons effectually Cured. See also Book 1 pag. 194. of Mr. *Echard's Roman History*.

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ferable Shifts and Plunges they are put to, who appear to oppose it.

I N the Instances we have here taken from the *Pagan* Enemies of Christianity, we have had rather Nonsense, and Romance oppos'd to the Argument of our Saviours Miracles, than Magick. However, as the sacred Writings themselves afford us several Instances of this kind, after it is observ'd all such wonders or Signs effected by evil Spirits, or their Agents, may be surely distinguish'd from real Acts of Divine Power, by their end, and the Nature of the Facts themselves, and that as what our Saviour did will justly stand the Test of those Rules, they were therefore Proofs of the Divine Power by which he acted; After I say this is laid down as the main Foundation in such an enquiry, it may not be unuseful to make some further Observations on the Nature of a true Miracle, as it is urg'd by us to be a Proof of a Divine Power.

THE word Miracle in its Etymology signifying an Act surprising, and out of the reach of humane Power, or indeed sometimes an Act, that is very great, and Magnanimous: The first of these is what we are chiefly concern'd in; namely, as it appears to us an Act of Power that strikes us with wonder and surprize, and for which we cannot by the strength of humane Reason give any Account.

THE Power of evil Spirits effecting something of this Nature, by what we call Magick, is what we have so fully attested, both from Prophan, and sacred History, that there is no room to doubt it; what we would therefore chiefly Consider, is, how far

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far this Power of Evil Spirits may be suppos'd to extend ?

AND in this, to enter into strict particulars must no doubt be exceeding difficult. For the Nature of Spirits being so little known to us, and their Power and Intellects being so much superior, particularly to say what they can do, is perhaps out of humane thought, but thus much we may say in the general ; that their Power can extend no further, than either to set such secret Wheels of Nature in motion which we are unacquainted with, and so the Consequences thereof are surprizing to us, and what we think Miraculous ; or else deluding even our Senses with the Appearances of such things which have no real existence, and putting them upon us for Miracles.

SOME examples taken from the sacred Writings of the Power of evil Spirits, compared with such Acts of Divine Power as were done by our Blessed Lord, will Considerably illustrate what is here observ'd.

THE first sort of these Powers in evil Spirits we have an Instance of in the Case of *Job*. The Devil here having the Permission of God, is said *Job ii. 7.* to *smite Job with sore Boils, from the Sole of his Foot, to his Crown.* The Fact it will be easily observ'd both in its nature, and end is exactly suited with the Temper of the Fiend ; but that which our present Enquiry most naturally leads us to, is by what Powers of Nature he could be suppos'd to effect this ?

I MUST own I am not very fond of Conjectures, but when they may be supported by the Nature, and Reason of the thing, in cases of this kind, something may be offer'd that way. Supposing then an Evil Spirit, by the Sagacity, and Intelligence of his Nature, to know such Particles of Matter, or effluvias in the Air, or any of the other Elements, as being spread or diffused round about any particular place, would be naturally absorb'd, either by Perspiration, or the natural attractions of the Pores in humane Bodies, which dilating themselves through the Blood, would break out in the Common effects of Pestilences, and Plagues; I say, supposing such an Evil Spirit to know where Infectious Airs are to be found, and being permitted by God, only to have Power to gather, or Collect them together, and spread them where he pleases; what is there in the Case of *Job*, but what every Physician, and the experience of all the World can Account for, from Natural Causes?

THE Supposing such a Knowledge, and such an Agency, in an Evil Spirit, cannot at all be thought irrational, from those Accounts we have of them in the holy Writings. We have in this very History of *Job*, Satan telling the Almighty of his having rang'd over the whole Expanse of the Earth, and after that being even in the Realms of Glory, if that may be suppos'd to be the place where the Sons of God are said to be assembled before him.

WHEN therefore the Nature, and Agency of a Spirit is consider'd, things may be effected that are very strange and extraordinary to us, which really are no other than the natural Products of Causes

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ses, and their genuine effects; and such upon thorough reflection would be found many of the Facts which we have reason to believe, have been truly done by what we call Magick, or the Power of an Evil Spirit.

THE Second Practice which is Common to such Agents is what we call Delusion; when Art and Subtily is used to deceive the Senses, and present such Images, and Appearances to the Eye, as have no real Essence. Of this in the holy Writings we have an Instance in the Case of the pretended Appearance of the Prophet *Samuel* to *Saul*. Melancholy, and the quickest Remorse having thrown this unhappy Prince into the very Depths of Despair, and the wonted Influences of Almighty Goodness having totally abandon'd him; In this wild Distraction o' his thoughts he has recourse to a Sorceress to help him to a sight of *Samuel* the Prophet then Deceas'd. This wretched Woman, prevail'd on by his importunities, uses her Arts, and the Venerable Appearance of the Prophet makes its approaches. *Saul*, disturb'd in Imagination at this, immediately on the Spectres asking the reason of his disquieting him, makes his Moans thereto, complaining of the distress he was under, and the necessity he therefore had of being advis'd. Here the Fiend had all the pleasure, if pleasure his Nature is capable of, he could have wish'd for. His part now was as he had deceiv'd him, so far, not only to upbraid him for his past Miscarriages, and sink him in the deepest Despair; but also to pretend to Prophecie what should befall him. 1 *Sam.* xxviii. *

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* THE *Commentators*, particularly *Pool*, gives us great variety of opinions about this appearance of *Samuel* to *Saul*.
On

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IT may be easily observ'd in this Account, every Circumstance concurr'd for the better carrying on of the Imposture. A wild distraction, and horror had seiz'd, and wholly possess'd the Spirits of the Miserable Prince who was to be the Spectator. All his Faculties were stun'd, and reason it self lost, in the dreadful forebodings of his impending Destruction. Without him, Death in all the frightful Varieties of its Terrors, the slaughter of his Countrymen, his Son, and himself, invade his sight in a sad prospective view. Within, the remorsive Stabs of a Conscience loaded with guilt, and wreck'd with the most dreadful

On the Account of his so directly predicting the Day of *Saul's* Death, it is thought by some, that it was not a bare *Phantome*, or Appearance of *Samuel*, but the true, and very *Samuel* rais'd by Almighty God himself from the Dead, both to the Surprise of *Saul*, and the Sorcerers too. But to this it is observ'd, the Term to Morrow, is not always determin'd to the immediate succeeding Day, but futurity in a more general, and extensive View. And that *Saul* should be cut off, and give place to his Successor *David*, an Evil Spirit might very easily Collect from what *Samuel* had declar'd before in that point, and when it is further observ'd how much the *Philistines* were flush'd at that time, and fitted for the encounter, and the Spirits of *Saul*, and his Party sunk, and confus'd, there needed not any thing like Prophecie to Conclude his Fall was very near. But how great soever the Authorities may be that seem to encline to this thought, there are undoubtedly many more, both in number, and weight, that take the whole Transaction to be no other than the illusion of Magick, and the Appearance nothing else but a *Phantom* impos'd, if not barely on this unhappy Princes sickly Imagination, yet on his sight by the Arts of some *Demon's* Personating of the Prophet in order to sink him the deeper into despair, and effect his total Ruin.

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ful apprehensions of Almighty Vengeance torture him worse than Death. The light of the Sun drawn in, and Darkness and the Gloom of Night, adding yet fresh horrors to the Confusion of his thoughts. These were the Circumstances *Saul* was under, when the Spectre appears, and what is there that could not be impos'd on such a Man, when his fears are work'd to such height, and every thing thus jumps to carry on the Deceit? After this, one would have thought there needed not any thing to have been done more to have kept the Panick up; but the Imposture without the Malice of the Fiend was not enough to be shown at this time; no! *Saul* must not only be plunged into Desperation, but triumph'd over too, and in this the Devil is resolv'd to be beforehand with the *Philistines*. "If the Lord has forsaken you, why do you apply to me? I told you of this before, and the reason of it, and now I tell you to morrow, you, and your Sons shall fall by the hands of your Enemies, and you and they shall be with me." Thus did he insult the wretched Monarch's Misfortunes, till sunk with Grief, and spent for want of Food, he brings him to the Earth, a direful Victim of infernal Spite.

How unlike was this whole Transaction to any of our Lord's true Miracles! He needed neither the Gloom of Night, nor Melancholy to cover what he did. When he raised the Dead, they were not the Fleeting Visions of the night, or the Airy *Phantoms* of a Disturb'd Imagination; but as what he did was real, and substantial, 'twas Permanent; the Persons seen, and Convers'd with afterwards, all done in the face of the Sun, and the truth, and reality of the Facts not so much as deny'd by his greatest Enemies. *Lazarus* is seen not only to rise out of the very Grave

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where he was laid, (not as *Samuel* here to rise like a Meteor out of the Earth in the methods of Amazement and Horror) but is seen to eat and drink, and perform all the common offices of humane Life. He was seen and spoke with daily, and thousands were made the Witnesses of the Fact; and this Consideration of the greatness, and Permanency of what our Lord did, with the many other Circumstances that are wanting in all the Instances of Magick, that can be possibly nam'd, abundantly shows the difference between the true Miracles were done by divine Power in Confirmation of the Gospel, and every thing that can be pretended to have been done by evil Spirits, or their Agents. And this will easily lead us to understand the injustice, and folly of that Conclusion drawn from our Lord and *Moses* his Cautioning us against such Pretenders to Miracles, since from their bare appearance alone we could not be able to judge of their truth and reality.

It cannot be imagin'd our Lord by the Caution he has given us against being deceiv'd by the false and specious pretences to Miracles, design'd by it in the least to invalidate the Argument he drew from his own. This were Blasphemously to represent him inconsistent with himself, but as for the want of well Considering the Nature, and end for which these pretended Miracles were done, we might thro' the narrowness of our Understandings be deceived by the Art and Subtilty of Evil Spirits, and their Agents, when we consider'd the specious Appearances they would make of Miracles only as Acts of Power; therefore it is we are with so much care Caution'd against them. Where there is a true Miracle done, that is such an Act as is out of the reach of all Created Power, that undoubtedly will always be

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be a proof of the Divine Mission of him that did it, and several of our Lord's Miracles being apparently such, the Argument he draws from them must be the strictest Demonstration : But this cannot sure be made to Conclude, where the Miracle is false, and pretended, and nothing else in Fact, but either the Force of Nature, or deceit and illusion ; and tho' we cannot perhaps be able to Judge of this difference by the Matter of Fact it self, barely consider'd as an Act of Power : Yet as from the Reason, and Nature of the thing such an Imposition may be put upon us ; this was the reason why we are forbid to pay any regard to such Impostors, let them back what they pretended to with never so many seeming Wonders.

THO' we are not able immediately to discern all the Sights and Cunning of our great Enemy, our Blessed Lord was fully appriz'd of them, and therefore it was the tender care and regard he had for us, that induc'd him so fully to Caution us against them, and indeed allows us no other rule to Judge of them by, than their Fruits, by which we can never fail discovering the Power they are done by.

EVIL Spirits, and their Agents may imitate a Miracle, as it is only an Act of Power ; but as it was in almost all the Instances in which our Lord was Concern'd, an Act of Goodness, and done too for the purest and most holy ends, the saving of Souls, as well as Curing of Bodies, this is out of the reach of all their Imposture, and was insisted to be so by our Lord himself, in his Answer to those who Charg'd him with being Acted by them.

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WHEN therefore we are caution'd by the holy Writings against the Signs, and lying Wonders (for so they are called by them) should be used to deceive us, we are not to suppose in the least it is design'd to invalidate what is argu'd by our Lord himself from the force of those Miracles which he did in Confirmation of his Mission, but only as proper and timely securities against all the vain pretences of such Impostures.

AND this we shall be able further to illustrate, now we are come to the third thing we advanc'd in Proof of the Christian Religion, viz. The Nature, and Perfection of the Doctrine of the Gospel it self.

FOR if that upon Examination appears to be holy, and good, and in all its parts Worthy of God, we are very sure neither the Devil, nor his Agents would use any of their Sights and Cunning in Confirmation of what is so Contrary to their Nature, and Interest. Tho' the difference between reallity, and illusion in Acts of Power, may not be easily distinguish'd, yet that between Light and Darkeness can never be so Confounded, and obscured by the utmost Art, but upon a serious inquisition it may be discover'd. Contradictions in Nature are obvious to the Commonest understandings; and as omnipotence it self is determin'd always to a Consistence with its own immutable Attributes, and therefore cannot Lye, or do any thing that is evil; much less can the Devil or his Agents pursue an end, that is entirely righteous, and good. But as the Gospel in all parts speaks it self to be exactly holy, and good without the least mixture or allay of evil, as we are very sure it could not for that reason proceed from wicked and evil Spirits,

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Spirits, so it could come from none but God himself. And this we shall endeavour fully to establish and prove from the following particulars, *viz.*

FIRST, In the Doctrine it lays down Concerning God, and his Worship.

SECONDLY, In the exact rectitude, and righteousness of its Moral Precepts with regard to our intercourse with one another : And,

THIRDLY, In the Rules it proposes for the proper Government and Conduct of our selves.

A THOROUGH Examination of each of these particulars, as they contain the whole both of our Faith, and Practice, will abundantly illustrate the Perfection of the Gospel, and speak the Divine Original we contend it to have.

FIRST then, let us consider the Doctrine it lays down concerning God, and his Worship.

AND here I believe it will be readily allow'd, under what views soever we Consider the Deity, the Account given of it by the Gospel, is the most rais'd and Consistent with the brightest Reason, of any the World could ever pretend to. Nothing that is unworthy of the Nature of God, is in any place said of him. The Greatness of his Majesty is propos'd in the strongest terms to strike us with the utmost Awe, and Reverence ; and that of his Goodness is presented to us in the endearing *Epithet* of a Father : In the one we have exhibited to us the loftiest Images of his Power, as he is the Creator, and Universal Monarch of

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of the World: In the other, the sweetness and tenderness of his regard for his Creatures. Every thing that is Perfect and Lovely, is entirely ascrib'd to him, and that his tremendous Greatness might not damp us with too much Terror, his very Essence is said to be Love. Love! the most moving of all the Powers of Virtue, the Ornament of our Nature, and the great spring of all that is desirable, is what the Gospel throughout seems to take an uncommon delight to describe the Deity by.

WHEN I thus mention the Beauty, and tenderness of the Deity as it is deliver'd to us in the Gospel, I would not be so understood, as if I design'd to represent these Characters of the Divine Nature, as peculiar only in the Doctrine of the Gospel; no, undoubtedly God Almighty is often in the Old as well as the New Testament declar'd to be not only a Great, a Mighty, and Terrible God, but also, full of Compassion, long-suffering, and of Great Goodness: But what I would chiefly observe is, that the Gospel seems more than ordinarily to dwell upon the Love of Almighty God to his Creatures, and that it is indeed in the whole History thereof, one continu'd exercise of such his kindness, and Beneficence to them. The single Phrase, *God so loved the World!* comprehends in it the whole of the Gospel, and may justly be taken for its Epitome.

PASS we from that which the Gospel represents as the Darling perfection of the Deity, to the Account it gives of his Nature, and Essence, and that we find asserted to be a Spirit. Thus our Blessed Lord to the Woman of Samaria, *God is a Spirit*. In the particular disquisition of the Nature of a Spirit, our Blessed Lord himself on another occasion, seems oblig'd to have

have

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have recourse to negative Terms : *a Spirit*, says he, *has not Flesh and Bones*, where it is plain he only tells us what a Spirit is not, but not what it is. God's being said to be a Spirit, therefore is to abstract in our Notion of him all sensible, and Corporeal Ideas, and to exclude from our thoughts the possibility of representing him by any thing of that kind. This as it entirely quits the World of the vain Follies, and superstitions that were entertain'd by it of that nature, and shows that the incorruptible Deity is not to be thought to be in, or represented by either Idol, or Images made with silver, Gold, or any other materials : So it equally excludes the Notion of his having Hands or Eyes, or other Corporeal, or Bodily Parts.

HERE too the same no doubt may be justly Collected from the writings of the Old Testament ; But its being any where there so fully and plainly, in so few Words laid down, cannot I think with equal certainty be said. The repeated Prohibition of all Idols or Images, there to be found, seems rather to turn on the Authority, and Will of the Legislator, or the Majesty, and Immensity of the Deity, than the reason of his being a Spirit ; and the full and more clear discovery of that particular, was probably among other things to shine forth in its utmost resplendency, and Glory with the Rays of the Gospel.

THE exact Consistence of this Notion of the Deity with the Dictates of Reason, none that pretend to any share of it will dispute. That infinity of every Perfection which makes up our rational Sentiments of the Deity, can never be made to Comport with his Consisting of any thing like Bodily Parts ; and tho'

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tho' our Ignorance of the Nature of Spirits, may give the finest head some difficulty in their particular Definition: Yet in the general we are naturally led to believe the Deity must be something entirely abstracted from Materiality, and in his Essence no ways under the reach of our Senses. It is most certainly infinitely beyond the grasp of Humane Reason, or indeed any other *by searching to find out God*, or so much as Conjecture what his Essence really is; but yet we may be very sure what it is not, and among other particulars that it is not Corporeal or Visible to our Bodily Eyes, because we are sure every thing of that kind is finite, and bounded; and God is infinite.

As God is declar'd by the Gospel, to be a Spirit, and Reason as readily suggests the same; So the Worship that is to be paid to him, bears therein the same denomination, and they that Worship him, are Commanded to *Worship him in Spirit and in Truth*. As God is a Spirit; so the Worship that is paid to him is as far as possible to be Correspondent, and not any thing of the external performance, but the integrity, and truth of the Votary is what is Chiefly regarded.

AND here it is that the Doctrine of the Blessed Jesus shines in its Brightest Lustre! This was truly making good what he came into the World for, *viz. To fulfil the Law*, and bring us to a *Reasonable Service*. How exceeding defective the World was in this particular, not only the Vanities, and Follies of Pagans, but even the practice of the *Jews* themselves most sadly spoke Religion was resolv'd into mere empty Pagantry, and he that acquitted himself in the Punctil-

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lio's of ritual Observances, imagin'd he had discharg'd himself of all Obligations.

NAY, indeed such was the Oeconomy of the Divine Wisdom it self, before the Coming of our Lord, that it seem'd only to shadow out this its great, and main purpose; and that very Law which it deliver'd it self, was but as it were a School-Master to lead the Infant World to this Discovery. Humane Nature was not able to bear so much light breaking in upon it at once; and Divine Goodness so manag'd the methods of discovering its purpose, as to lead it to a full apprehension, by the gentlest steps and Progression. A particular detail of the Defects of the Law this way, were to enter into every Branch of it, there being scarcely any thing in the whole System thereof of this kind, but what is convey'd to us by Types, and Shadows, which could not by the greatest Doctors be fully, and exactly understood 'till the fullness of Time was come. *God who at Sundry Times, and in divers manners spoke in time past to the Fathers, reserv'd this great Notion, of that Life and Immortality which was to be brought to Light by the Gospel, to be amply display'd only by him who was the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person.*

THREE Rules laid down by our Blessed Lord himself for our better carrying on this his great, and indeed in an Eminent degree peculiar Doctrine of Worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth, cannot be improperly observ'd from his most excellent Sermon on the Mount. The first is concerning the Duty of Alms; the Second of Prayer; and the Third of Fasting.

AND

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AND first of the Duty of Alms-Giving.

TAKE heed, says our Blessed Lord, that you do not your Alms before Men to be seen of them, otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven. Therefore when thou dost an Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou dost Alms, let not thy left hand know Mat. vi. 1, what thy right hand doth: That thine Alms to 4. may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

As 'tis the particular care of our Lord in his Doctrines to fix in our Minds in all the Instances of our Duty, our chief and first regard to the will, and pleasure of God: So in that before us, he has so Circumstantiated that matter, as to render it impossible in the Worshipping him with our substance, to have any thing in our thoughts, but such a desire to please him. There is not perhaps any part of our Duty, (Considering the general Temper, and Biass of Humane Nature to the Interests of this World) that is a surer Test of our regard to God, and his Laws, than that of distributing the Acquisitions of Fortune freely to the necessities of those that want them; but even this may, and has been done upon Motives that are far from being pleasing to God.

THOSE of the Scribes and Pharisees our Lord you see has told us were, that they might be seen of Men; but the secrecy with which he enjoyns us to practice this Duty, strips us of every thing of that kind. When

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When we so manage our Alms that they cannot be known to any but God and our selves; and Conceal them with the same care, and Assiduity as we generally do our Crimes; when we satisfy our selves with only the pleasing reflection, and Consciousness of having done our Duty, and expect only our Reward from that God whose Will it is, we know, we should so do; this is truly to worship him in Spirit and in Truth, and he whose Almighty Wisdom makes him naturally a particular observer of such a Conduct, accepts of the services done him this way, with a double regard. 'Tis the perfection of the Doctrines in Christianity, that they are out of the reach of being imitated by the Hypocrite, and are inconsistent with his very Essence. He may be perswaded to part with his Money, but to part with it in such a manner, as in his Notion can purchase him neither Honour, nor Interest; when neither the pomp of the Trumpet soothes his Ambition, nor the Reputation of his Goodness incites any to Confide in him, and promote his Interest, his Ends are entirely lost, and the Mask then is kept on to no purpose. As to that of Futurity, he knows the hope of the Hypocrite shall perish; and take from him once all the Gratifications of this World, and you will soon find the very Appearance of his Goodness and Charity will leave him too.

BUT the Man who truly Acts up to the Doctrine here deliver'd by our Lord, has the opportunity not only of regaling his Soul with the pleasing expectations of his promis'd reward, but has the satisfaction of feeling the *Spirit of God bear witness with his own Spirit*, to his Truth, and Integrity; and tho' his Modesty and Religion teaches him to know *the Heart is deceitful above all things*: Yet when he knows too,
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and has often experienc'd the Chearfulness of his obedience under such Circumstances as here directed by his Lord, his hopes then must be sure, and unshaken, and not to be deceiv'd.

WE are taught by our holy Religion, that the three great Fountains from whence all Evil flows, consist in *the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life.* That is, the desire of sensual pleasure, Riches, and Honours.

WHATEVER Action therefore is so Circumstantiated as to be entirely free from the least spice of any of these, we may be very sure cannot be evil; and when apply'd to Instances of Religion, must be perfectly Good, and acceptable to God. This perhaps may be thought a bold Assumption, but when it is consider'd that it is expressly said *all that is in the World (i. e.)* all the Wickedness that is in the World is the Lust, &c. And the Reason and experience of all Mankind assure them that so in fact it is, our own natural reflections will easily Conclude, there is nothing in such an Assertion but what will prove only the familiar result of effects and their proper Causes, and what cannot be otherwise without inverting the stated Course and Nature of Things.

THE Application we are more immediately concern'd in, relating to the Doctrines of Religion, the making good this observation in that particular, is what will be most naturally expected. In the Case then of such Doctrines as entirely exclude all possibility of giving even the hopes of Gratification to any of the Passions, it will be readily admitted they cannot in the nature of the thing be supposed to be the springs from whence they flow. For as sweet
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Waters cannot possibly be taken out of a Fountain that is bitter, neither can any thing that is suggested by such Desires, in reason be thought wholly inconsistent with their Gratification; and as the Goodness and Purity of God is only capable of forming such Principles, or Rules of Conduct as shall thus entirely exclude them from bearing any part therein: So where-ever such Principles, or Rules are laid down, we are very sure they must come only from him; every other Cause we can by the utmost stretch of thought suppose, being unequal, and so consequently incapable of so Great an Effect.

AND this among the many other Doctrines of Christianity shines with the greatest Beauty and Lustre in what is laid down by our Lord in the private giving of our Alms; in which the motives a Man must necessarily Act upon, are so entirely exclusive of every possible Gratification of any of our irregular Desires, that if the bare Consideration of the Goodness of the Action, and the pleasing our Maker is not the sole incitement, we cannot be said to Act upon any Principle at all. The Lust of the Flesh cannot move us thereto, because that is in many Cases so far from being indulg'd, that it is abridg'd thereby. The Lust of the Eye can never be pleas'd with parting with its Idol: Alms-deeds of all things in the World, cannot be made the Food of Covetousness, and the Love of Money. Nor can the Pride of Life be ever sooth'd where there are no fawning Crowds to shout forth the pompous Plaudits, nor even so much as the Whispers of any thing in this World to say well done. No, secret Alms can only be rewarded by him that sees in secret, and he that thus comes to God, must truly believe that he is, and

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only is the rewarder of them who pay him an undissembled Obedience.

THE Second Direction our Lord gives us, in order to our Worshipping of God in Spirit and in Truth, is concerning the Duty of Prayer. *When thou Prayest* says he, *thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men. Verily I say unto you, they have their Reward. But thou when thou Prayest, enter into thy Closet, Mat. vi. 5, 6. and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.*

I WOULD not put up my own, (perhaps particular) thought, as any thing by which the Strength, and force of Christianity should be Judg'd by; but yet I can't help on this occasion observing, the care our Blessed Lord takes to fix in our Minds the most awful, and undissembl'd fence of the Omniscience and Omnipresence of Almighty God. The true Notion of these are in my Opinion one of the noblest Principles of Religion, and where they are effectually preserv'd, the Conduct of Life cannot be very irregular. To think and believe the great God does take cognisance of all we say, or do, and agreeably determines his resolution, both as to the Reward or Punishment which will be our final allotment, must have a considerable influence on our Carriage, and while we are thus persuaded, Wickedness, and Impiety cannot easily gain upon us. In those Retirements in our Prayers here so strongly exacted, nothing but this Consideration can take place in our Thoughts; because when our demeanour is so contriv'd, only the
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Omnipresence of God can be witness to it; and without such a Belief, retirement in this Case were the greatest Absurdity. 'Tis therefore more for our own particular Benefit and Satisfaction, than his own Glory (which certainly is most resplendant, and Conspicuous by our publick Acts of Devotion) that this practice is recommended to us. He that is the Great, and only Searcher of the Heart, can easily discover its deceits amidst the most specious Appearances, and therefore needs not this Test of our Sincerity: But we through the various mixture and perplexity of even our own thoughts, cannot so well Judge in this point, without they are stript of so much as the possibility of acting upon any other Motives than those alone arising from a Sense of Duty. When you pray therefore, retire into your Closet, let none but the God you Worship be Witness to your Addresses; then you may be very certain that God is satisfy'd of the Integrity, and Honesty of your Heart, because not only he by his unsearchable Wisdom, but even you your selves by the reflections of your own Breast, must know such a Conduct can only result from that Faith, without which it is impossible to please God.

THE Matter and Form of Prayer, which our Lord afterwards directs us to make use of in these our Retirements, and indeed at all other times, as it may be presumed to be generally known by all, so it were offering it the greatest injury to enter into only some slight and perfunctory remarks upon its nature, and perfection. The Wisdom and Goodness of God are so evidently Conspicuous in the whole Composure, that for my part I cannot but think it more properly the Business of a whole Life, than any thing the room these Papers can allot for it to consider,

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and duly weigh the Strength, and exceeding extent of each Petition. The best way of Commenting upon it, is by using it often, and seriously considering what it is we say, and to whom we speak; this will Naturally raise in our Minds that value, and Reverence for the Beauty, and Perfection contain'd in it, as will not so readily, and effectually be excited by the most elaborate, and copious enforcements of its Sense and Excellence either from the Pulpit or Press; and therefore to this chiefly would I refer you, in order to your having a Just, and proper Notion of the Divinity, and inimitable Excellency of what we commonly call, the *Lord's Prayer*.

BUT however as he has propos'd it himself as a part of that Worship of God which must be perform'd in Spirit, and in Truth, it may not be improper in the general to consider how well it consists with that Rule, and may be suppos'd to agree with the object, it is address'd to. The beginning of it is taken up in the Celebration of the Goodness, and Glory of God. The first we acknowledge in the strongest and most endearing Epithet, that of a Father. And the Second by the mention of the seat of his Majesty in Heaven, and the desire that his Name might be hallowed, his Kingdom advanced, and his Will obeyed by us here on Earth, as it is by the Blessed Spirits in Heaven. The correspondence of such addresses to the sublimest Notions humane Nature can possibly entertain of the Deity, the bare mention of them alone suggests. What greater Image can there be convey'd to our Thoughts, to raise the Sentiments of Love and Reverence towards our Maker, by the utmost force of Language, than that which is here presented in every word?

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WHERE can we suppose Infinite Power to be better lodg'd, than in the hands of a Father? Majesty under this Circumstance loses its Terrors, and we are naturally led rather to love than dread it, when it is so dress'd. Would you be maz'd in the Contemplation of the Brightness, and Splendour of his Glory? here he is plac'd on his Celestial Throne the kind Listener to your Petitions, pleas'd with the observation of your Services, and ready even to anticipate your wants. If you should be wanting of proper Language for his praise, you are taught to beg for the Zeal, and Abilities of the very Angels, for its compleat Celebration.

OUR Blessed Lord having by this Beautiful order of this our Address to the Divine Majesty, fully instructed us in the justest and most proper Notions of the Goodness and Glory of his Being, the Relation he bears to us, and the proper desires we may express for his Glory; he proceeds next to direct us what we may properly ask and beg of him for our own good, and that is, the necessities of Life, the forgiveness of our Sins, and a full Deliverance from all Evil. Petitions which tho' they are contain'd in the fewest Words, reach every possible want Humane Nature is Subject to. To descend to each of the particulars as deliver'd by our Lord himself. *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

THE word *Bread* was by a Figure of Speech Common with the *Hebrews*, extended to every Instance of Food for Sustenance. Thus when *Joseph* was going to entertain his Brethren with a plentiful Banquet, he is only said to bid the Servants that attended

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Set on Bread; tho' the particulars of it afterwards are said to be Messes of different and various kinds; so as that his own and that of the *Egyptians*, and his Brethrens are said to be distinct. Not but that there is something no doubt to be observ'd from the modesty of the Phrase, by which we are taught not to launch out into Luxuriancy in our desires, but to express a readiness of being Contented with only such allotments as are necessary, and what is in Scripture Language called *Food Convenient*, such as might only feed and refresh our Bodies, but not raise, and pamper our Lusts.

NOR are our desires in this Case to extend much to futurity; we are to pray only for our *daily Bread*, our immediate and necessary wants of this kind, that God might every day have the honour of our thus Evidencing our dependence upon him. He that feeds the young Ravens when they cry, expects that we should cast the Cares of the Morrow chiefly on his Providence; and after common Prudence has been used in the Management of our Affairs, all Solitude and Anxiety should be quitted from our Thoughts about hereafter.

THO' we would industriously avoid every thing that looks like enlarging on this Subject; yet there is one Sense of this Petition ought by no means to escape our Observation, and that is what our Church in her Catechism very well expresses by our desiring such things as are *needful both for our Souls and Bodies*. The Men of Wit perhaps may think it hard to be brought back to their Catechism, but 'tis no matter for that, as long as the Soul and its welfare is of the greatest Consequence; the necessary wants of that

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ought undoubtedly never to be forgotten. When therefore we pray for our daily Bread, let us be sure to have in our thoughts what our Blessed Lord has told us he is himself, *the Bread of Life.* John vi. 35.

THE wants of both our Souls and Bodies being thus fully Comprehended in this first Petition for our own good; we are next taught with regard to the necessary Lapses, and Infirmities of Humane Nature, to desire the forgiveness of our debts, or as it is in another Evangelist *Trespases as we forgive them that Trespas against us.* The extent of these Words as reaching every possible guilt we can contract, with the necessity of them, will appear of it self at first view. But the Condition with which they are put up, being something peculiar to the Gospel, and so great a stress laid upon it therein, it will not unusefully take in some part of our Consideration.

THIS one of the Sublime Precepts of our holy Religion, that we should be *perfect as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect*, and therefore it is our Beneficence, and kindness to our Fellow Creatures, and thereby imitating the Goodness of God, which is made by him the reason of the like regard to us. *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven; but if you forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your Trespases.* Good nature, and a sweetness of temper, being the greatest and most truly noble part of Humanity, with whatever Strength it be enforced by the Gospel, no reasonable Man can quarrel with it surely upon that Account. Let us then think not so much of the difficulty, as the Excellency of the Temper here recommended, and then we shall easily see why it is made so much the Condition, which
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will render our Prayers acceptable, and move even God himself to be propitious to them.

IN the Last and Finishing part of our Petitions, lest thro' the weakness and frailty of our Natures offences should grow too fast upon us, we are taught to implore the Goodness of God to interpose, and screen us from their numerous assaults. *Lead us not into Temptation, but Deliver us from Evil.* Such being the unhappy tendency of our own Inclinations, the Cunning and Art of evil Spirits, and the Snares and allurements that continually assail us from this wicked World; our Blessed Lord deems it necessary we should call in greater and more forcible Succours, than we can possibly gather from only our own strength. And since nothing can happen unto us without the Knowledge of God, we are here taught modestly to desire of him to prevent such Tryals and Incitements to Sin, as he knows will be more than we are able to bear, and that he would not bring, or suffer us to be brought into such Circumstances, as will lead us to offend him. And as we are taught to implore his Goodness, so we do likewise acknowledge his Power, in that it is he, and only he, that can deliver us both from the evil, and Punishment of Sin.

UPON the whole, to express our full faith and Confidence in the Great and Good God whom we thus address, we Conclude all in the most Solemn acknowledgment of those Infinite Excellencies, and Perfections of the Deity, which make him so justly the object of our Adoration and Praise. *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory for ever, and ever, Amen.* The Kingdom, as he has Dominion over all Things; the Power, as he Sustains and Governs them; the Glory, as it is manifest in them all; and the Eternity,

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as he will continue so to be and do, for ever and ever.

THE *Amen* to a Prayer so Excellent, so Worthy of the God it is put up to, and so fully, and well suited to the wants of Humane Nature, cannot be disputed by any. 'Tis so firmly fixt to our Interest as well as Duty, that could we suppose any so hardy as to hesitate, it would speak him not only an Enemy to God, but even to himself.

OUR Blessed Lord having thus Stated the two Great Duties of Charity, and Prayer, and told us in the best manner here both to Praise our Maker, and Petition to him for our wants: He proceeds in the third place fully to direct us in our Management of our selves with regard to another Duty, which ought often to be joyn'd to the two former, viz. that of Fasting. *When you fast, (says he) be not as the Hypocrites are, of a sad Countenance: For they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto Men to fast. Verily I say unto you they have their Reward. But Mat. vi. 16, thou when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and 17, 18. wash thy face, that thou appear not unto Men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, he shall reward thee openly.*

THO' it must be allowed to be the distinguishing Perfection and Excellency of the Gospel, that it makes all the Parts of our Duty to consist rather in the proper employment of our Souls, than any external Exercises of the Body: Yet as Fasting was ever deem'd an expressive significant evidence of the humility of the Mind, as well as a restraint on the Body, our Lord here has Adopted it as a Part of that Spiritual Worship, which

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which he Recommends to his Followers. But the Management of this being such in our Lord's Time, as rather to shew the vanity, than Depression of the Mind; and the abjectness and dejection of their Appearance who seem'd most to value themselves on the frequency of their Abstinence, being only a mask to hide the Hypocrisie, and Pride of their Hearts: Our Lord so directs our Conduct in this particular, as to Exclude all it's idle Pageantry for the future, and make it a proper expression of only the inward Sense, and Compunction of the Mind. The Body it's true is to be Abridg'd; but the Chearfulness of the Countenance is to Conceal it; and tho' we are really to fast, yet we are not to appear to Men to do so. As the very End and Design of Fasting, or Voluntarily denying our selves the common enjoyments of Life; is to express the just Sense we have, how little we deserve 'em from our Great Creator, and the forfeiture we have made of them by our continu'd Provocations and Sins; so by the Alacrity and Chearfulness with which we are to appear to do this, we are at once to satisfy him, what we do is in pure regard to his Will, and thereby evince, we think none of his Services a Burden. A Reasonable, must always be a Chearful Service, and he that performs any Part of Worship to his Maker with a Sullen and Dogged Countenance, seems rather to give him the Drudgery of a Slave, than the Obedience of a Son; and while he would appear to Honour, in Truth Reproaches his Maker.

THAT therefore the Acts of our Duty might be Generous and Free, as well as void of Hypocrisy and Pride, it may be not irrationally Concluded, the Wisdom of our Lord thus thought fit to direct the manner of our Fasting; and when it is considered

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ed the Devotion (the advancing and heightening of which, Fasting is design'd for) is to be secret, it is no wonder to find the means bear an agreeable Correspondence with the End, and the God to whom they are joyn'tly Address'd, is only made the judge of both.

THE Duties here enjoyn'd, *viz.* Of Alms-Giving, Prayer, and Fasting, Reason and Nature have in all places made the great Parts of what has been call'd Religion. To enlarge on them therefore as Duties, is entirely needless, because they have been agreed to be so by all Mankind; what we would chiefly insist on, therefore, as the great Perfection of the Christian Doctrine, is the laying down such Rules for the Practice of them, as strips them of every possible motive of this World, and must make them only flow from a just Sense of God and Religion. For where God alone is made the Witness, if what we do is well done, he alone can be the Rewarder. And this is the great Principle our Blessed Lord would have us Act upon, and always fix and rivet in our Minds, that it is pleasing, and acceptable to him, that we should Act so and so, and that, and that alone is made the Reason to determine the whole Conduct of our Lives.

AND this upon very little Reflection will lead us next to Consider the Great and Important Sanctions which our Blessed Lord has affix'd to the Obedience, or Disobedience to the Precepts of the holy Religion he has deliver'd to the World. And these are such as are exactly suited to the Nature, and Genius thereof. For as the one is Spiritual and entirely Abstracted from every Biass, or Interest of this World: So is the other too, and whatever Reward,

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ward, or Punishment we are either to expect, or deserve, is referr'd to another World. In the Accounts of the former, the Gospel tells us 'tis what *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive*: Something to be sure, therefore, very distant from the reach of all our Senses, and Ideas of Material and Corporeal Objects; and what therefore must be deem'd a Spiritual Happiness, and as such Consequently a proper Reward for a Spiritual Service. In that of the other, we are told our sad Doom will be to Converse and share Punishments with the Devil, and his Angels, *Where the Fire is not Quenched, and the Worm dieth not*. Darkness and Horror are to affright us on every side; and tho' these and many such other Metaphors made use of by the Holy Pen-men, may seem indeed to extend to our Senses; Yet when it is consider'd the Wicked and the Infernal Spirits are joyntly to be plung'd into the same Punishments, such expressions are Probably to be taken only as Figures, and Elegancies of Speech, which rather are design'd to give us some frightful Images of the Greatness, than proper Nature, and kind of the Miseries of the Damn'd.

BUT whatever may be thought by the Curious of Disquisitions of this kind; certain it is the Sanctions of the Religion our Lord has laid down, refer both in the Rewards and Punishments to something exquisitely beyond any possible Ideas we can entertain of them, while we are in this World, and will only be known by us when we come to another. Thus much indeed we know of them from the Accounts of the Gospel, that they will be both Eternal in their Duration; and as the Glory and Felicity of the one will be an *Incorruptible Crown*
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that fadeth not away, an exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory: So the Horrors and Torments of the other, will be of the same Eternity, and never have an End. We are assur'd too of the exactest Justice in the Distribution of them; for as it is the infinitely Wise God, who is to be the Judge to pass the Sentence: So we are told he *will bring every Work into Judgment*, and his Wisdom has so far engag'd it self in the matter, as to extend even to the most secret of our Thoughts. The little turns of Evasion and Craft will be of no effect at this Bar; for as the Judge we are to be try'd by, is not unrighteous, and so will not forget, and disregard any thing we have done that can recommend us to his favour; neither will he let so much as an idle Word escape his Observation.

THE Notion of a Judgment to come, has in some degree been entertain'd by all Mankind: But as it is the great, and finishing Principle of all Religion; the full and clear Discovery of the Nature, and Manner of the whole Process, may be justly insisted on, as one of the peculiar Perfections of the Doctrine of our Blessed Lord, and the Gospel he has deliver'd to us. But as all the Instances of our Conduct will be taken under the Consideration of this great Audit, as well as those that relate to God and his Worship, the particulars of this may more properly take up our Thoughts hereafter in the further Prosecution of this Work.

THE Worship of God has been generally Distinguish'd by Divines into two sorts, *Private*, and *Publick*; what we have had as yet occasion to speak of, it may easily be observ'd, is the former of these, which as it is fix'd on that just Notion of God, and
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his Attributes, as must alone speak the Directions laid down concerning it to flow from his Wisdom, and Goodness: So the Distinction it self cannot at this time be unnecessary, at once to explode the Notion of those who would confine all the just thoughts of God and Religion to a Cloister, or place them only in an Imaginary Invisible Church of their own making, exclusive of the positive Institutions, and External Ordinances of even our Blessed Lord himself. For however in our Private Capacities, as we are consider'd only single Christians, and not incorporated into Society, that God which seeth in Secret, is undoubtedly the only Proper Witness of what we do, and therefore it is our Blessed Lord has Commanded it so to be: Yet when we are consider'd as Members of Societies, and such we must always be, as we are made the Parts of the Visible Church, in this Case we are to be like *a City upon a Hill*, open and plain to all about us; and in all the Instances of our Duty, *Let our Light so shine before Men, that they allur'd by the Splendour of our Bright Examples,* may be induc'd to joyn with us in our good Works, and Jointly with us, *Glorifie our Father which is in Heaven.* This too is the Command of our Blessed Lord, and tho' he does indeed particularly recommend to us the Practice of Retirement, in order to purge our Minds from every possibility of bare Pageantry and Hypocrisie, and fix in them the most Just and Aweful Notion of both the Wisdom, and Omnipresence of God: Yet he does not so do this as in the least to exclude the most Solemn, and Publick Methods of setting forth his Praise, or any other Acts of Worshipp by which we may be said to pay a just regard to his Great and Glorious Being, or express the Sence of Duty and Gratitude we owe to him. We are Commanded not only each of

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of us singly by our selves in Closets, but in the most Numerous, and Solemn Assemblies, with *one Heart, and one Mouth, to Glorifie God*; and as we are all by virtue of the same Common internal Principle, or Faith, to believe in and acknowledge *one Lord*, so we are to Evidence this our Internal Principle, or Faith, by visibly, and openly submitting to *one Baptism*, and being in the Language of the Holy Writings, *Partakers of one Bread*.

THE Extent of these Papers not being compatible to the taking in all particulars, we would only observe further with regard to Publick, as well as private Worship, the Rule is the same, and this too must be done in Spirit, and Truth. And this will be properly evidenc'd by another Rule our Blessed Lord lays down for both Publick, and private Worship, that it is to have the Preference to every thing else, and is to take up the first, and best of our Thoughts. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*. God and his Worship, as they are in their Nature the most important Acts of our Lives, are to be always the first things we engage in; and as in point of Dignity, and Reason they ought, so in fact they should precede every thing else. This therefore is the reasonable Service our Blessed Lord exacts of his followers, and enforces with such a particular energy as admits no Competition. Not Father nor Mother, no, nor the Wife of our Bosom can in this case claim any regard; and he that is not willing to follow his God, and his Saviour even on these Terms, is a Stranger both to the Spirit, and Truth of the Gospel.

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A N D thus much may suffice for the first thing we propos'd, in order to evince the Excellence, and Perfection of the Doctrines of the Gospel, as they relate to God, and the Worship which ought to be paid to him. The Second particular offer'd to this end was, the exact Rectitude, and Righteousness of it's Moral Precepts, with regard to our Intercourse with one another.

A N D here we might safely Challenge the most Sagacious Enemy to Christianity, to lay so much as one Blemish to the Charge of the Gospel in its Moral Precepts. Property of every kind is so entirely secur'd by them, that not only every Instance of it's Violation is Condemn'd by them, but the very desire, or wish after any thing that is anothers is deem'd Criminal. Violence, and Wronge are discharg'd from the Heart, as well as the Hands, and he that hates his Brother, is adjudg'd as much a Murderer, as the Wretch who actually perpetrates his Wicked Purposes. And that our Notions of Morality might be as easie and familiar to us as they are in their Nature Excellent, and Sublime; our Blessed Lord has set up a sort of Court of Chancery, where they are to be judg'd in every Mans own Breast, and has made the Natural, and Common Reflections thereof, the Rule by which it must always be determin'd. *Thou shalt, says he, Love thy Mat. xxii. Neighbour as thy Self. Whatsoever there- 39. vii. 12. fore thou wouldest that Men should do unto thee, do thou even so unto them.* Nothing certainly can be a greater security against any kind of injustice, than this single Principle well attended to. As it makes every Man at once his own Judge, and Casuist, so it brings every Dispute to such an easie Decision, that the most Ignorant in the Theory of

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of Laws, and their different, and comparative Excellencies, cannot be at a Loss. Every Man is a judge of the Sense of his own Mind, and 'tis no further, our Blessed Lord would carry us to Determine the Rights of our Neighbours. Should we know, and think our selves to be Wrong'd in such, or such a Case by the easiest Transition of Thought, in the Application of the Rule before us, we may equally Determine the same Case for our Neighbour, and when Things are brought thus Home, 'tis almost an unnatural partiality that can deceive and make us Err in our Judgment.

'Tis one of the Greatest perfections of a Legislator, that the Rules he lays down in his Moral Prescriptions are easie, and plain to be understood; and nothing sure that ever was made can be more so, than this Great, and universally Extensive Rule of our Blessed Lord. But that which yet further enhances the Perfection of the Gospel, is, that the Rules prescrib'd by it are not only Adequate, and exactly fitted to the purposes they are Design'd for, but those purposes themselves are so exactly fix'd in the Nature and Reason of things in every particular, as they Form the Distinctions of Good and Evil, that it must appear with the least Examination upon that single Account the most Perfect Law of Righteousness that was ever yet given to Mankind. In it's Commanding of Good, nothing that the most rais'd Contemplations of the most Refin'd Moralists could ever think of, comes up to it. It extends our Love and Beneficence to all Mankind, and brings even the bitterest of our Enemies under the happy Influence of it. To take in every particular were little less than Transcribing of the whole Gospel; however take this Summary from its own Lan-

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guage. *Whatsoever things are True, whatsoever things are Honest, Whatsoever Things are Just, Phil. iv. 8. Whatsoever Things are Pure, Whatsoever Things are Lovely, Whatsoever Things are of good Report: If there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praise, think of these Things. Or in yet fewer Words from our Blessed Lord's own Mouth, Be ye Perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect.*

IN it's Prohibition of Evil, it is so exceeding full and extensive, as not only to reach, and regulate our outward Actions, but the very inmost, and most secret Recesses of our Souls. We are told by it, that *the Wrath of God is Reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness of Men,* and we are to shun so much as the *Appearance of Evil.* Iniquity of every kind is as it were pluck'd up by the Roots, and no sort of it is to gain Admittance so much as to our Thoughts. And that it might fully guard us from every possible Temptation to it, it carries us to it's very Fountain head, and Cautions us with the utmost tenderness, and care, against every thing that may be a means to incite us to its Practice. This World, amidst the vast Variety of its Objects, presenting us continually with some which will have Force on our irregular Appetites; there is nothing in the Counsels of the Holy, and Great Law of the Gospel more press'd upon us, than to possess our Minds with the utmost Indifference towards it, and every thing that is in it. *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World; for if any Man Love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* The Interests of the Gospel, and the purity of its Laws are in all their Parts so very inconsistent with the common pursuits of this World, that

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that 'tis impossible to be devoted to the Service of both at the same time. Our Blessed Lord himself has represented it as Serving two opposite Masters, where a regard for one, makes us naturally despise and contemn the other. *We cannot Serve God and Mammon.* Not that the World, or any thing that is in it, as it came from the Hands of our Creator, nor the reasonable Enjoyments of it, are Chargeable with any thing of this kind; but our wild and ungovernable Passions so often abusing of it, and turning what was design'd as our Happiness, into all manner of Evil and Licentiousness, is what makes it so dangerous to us, and therefore makes the Holy Laws of the Gospel so much, and so carefully caution us against it. The unhappy Degeneracy of our Nature by our first Fall, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, being the great and predominant Passions that reign in us, and this World every where presenting Objects for their Gratification, the better to avoid the Power of their Temptations, we are commanded to wean, and draw off our Affections from the World it self, and consider our selves not as fix'd and stated Inhabitants thereof, but only as Sojourners and Persons that are sent here to act a Part, and then must leave it to go to a better. This is the great Principle the Gospel expects we shou'd act upon, and all its Doctrines are mainly fitted and calculated to that End, but more particularly two of them, which we would now more immediately enter into the Consideration of, *viz.*

First, IN its Doctrine of a Divine Providence, or God Almighty's Superintending, and Governing of the World. And,

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Secondly, In its Doctrine of a future Judgment, at the last and final Day of Accounts.

AND *First*, as to a Providence.

WICKEDNESS, and Infidelity never show their Absurdity as well as Impiety more, than when their Opposition to the truths of Religion is express'd by any thing which they would have the World receive in their stead. *Epicurus's* denying a divine Providence, was not more odious to all the reasonable Part of Mankind for its abominable Wickedness, than the Reason he gave for so doing, was Ridiculous. All his Opposers presently saw the Indolence and Inactivity he imagin'd in the Deity, was rather fetch'd from the mean Luxury and Idleness of his own Temper, than any thing could be Collected from the reasonable Notions of a God, and as readily charg'd the one on the narrowness and incogitancy of his Philosophy, as the other on the wickedness and Impiety of his Heart. But how readily soever the Reason of all Mankind might lead them to conclude the Impossibility of the Notion of a God, without at the same time believing he presid'd over, and govern'd the World; yet very certain it is, the most rais'd Speculations of the best, and wisest Sages, in the particulars in which this Divine Providence is concern'd, were so exceeding doubtful, and perplex'd in their Accounts, as to render the Doctrine itself of little use to the World: Their common, and generally receiv'd Notion of an irresistible Fate, and their so often resolving Events into what they call'd Chance, or Fortune, made the Doctrine of a divine Providence, at best, but an empty Speculation, and their most intense Thoughts about

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about it in the Application, to be of little use either to themselves, or others. This therefore, as well as many other great and important Principles, must take its full light and force from the Accounts of our Blessed Lord and his Gospel, where we have it brought down to the minutest Circumstances of Life, and God Almighty is said to have such a watchful Eye over us, and every thing that belongs to us; as to *Number the very Hairs of our Heads*, so that not one of them falls to the Ground without his Knowledge. There is such a winning Beauty, and Innocence in our Lord's manner, as well the matter of his Reasoning on this great Doctrine, as renders it as Delightful, as Instructive. He carries us for its Illustration to the Birds of the Air, and the Flowers of the Field, and makes the most common and Familiar Objects of our Senses speak, and give in their Testimony to the Truth of it. *Take no thought, says he, for your Life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what you shall put on: Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?* as if he had said, can you imagine that the same kind God, by whose Influence your whole Being is preserv'd, and from whom the power of every Breath you draw is deriv'd, cannot as easily give Nourishment as Breath, and Cloaths as a Body, without either your Assistance or Solitude, about them? Vain unthinking Man! *Behold the Fowls of the Air, they Sow not, neither do they Reap, nor gather into Barns, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not much better than they?* And again, *Why take you thought for Raiment? consider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his Glory was not array'd like one of these. Wherefore if God so cloath the*

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Grass of the Field, which to day is, and to Morrow is cast into the Oven, shall be not much more Cloath you, O ye of little Faith!

OUR natural and rational Notions of the Deity leading us to think it Infinite in every Perfection; and Goodness, Wisdom, and Power being in their Nature what we take in under the notion of Perfections; these all consequently being in the Deity in an infinite Degree, and its Care and Concern for the whole of the Creation, such as our Blessed Lord has here asserted; undoubtedly, the Doctrine of divine Providence, as deliver'd by the Gospel, is a Principle equal to our Support under every possible Emergency of Life, and the Man who truly believes, and confides in it, can never be deprest. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* As infinite Power cannot be abridg'd, so when it is directed by infinite Wisdom, it cannot be eluded; and after this, when infinite Goodness is joyn'd to both of these, it must make Choice of what is best. The noble result of the Christian's Faith therefore from the Doctrine of Divine Providence, whatever shall befall him, must be, that it is still for the best, and were he as Wise, and as Good as God, he would of himself wish, and desire, that things might be ordered just as they are. His Experience, and consequently from thence his Modesty will easily inform him, how apt he is to err in his Judgment, and choice of Things; but when he is assur'd Almighty God is the Manager, there he fixes a sure Anchor, and finds the force of the Words of an Apostle, that *this is the Victory that Overcomes the World, even our Faith*, and under all Difficulties, by virtue of this Shield he comes off more than Conqueror. *Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruine*, as Horace feigns of his Hero; He

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He knows not what it is to be daunted, tho' Heaven and Earth were rent asunder in his Presence; for he knows that his God is unalterable, and without any shadow of Changing, and as he has his Promise for his Security, he leaves his Wisdom to determine the Time when he will make that Promise good. This he is very sure of, his time is always the best, and if it does not take place in this World, he is very well satisfy'd to find it in the next. And this brings us to the Second thing propos'd to be consider'd, the Doctrine of a future Judgment.

AND this, as God Almighty in our Notion of his Providence, is taken by us to be the supream Monarch, and Governour of the World, may be taken for the finishing and decisive part of such his Administration. The Method of Providence in what we call the Judicial part, in its Government of the Moral part of the Creation, tho' it may in some extraordinary Cases exert itself, yet is chiefly to be referr'd to that great and terrible Day, when every thing will be judg'd, and finally determin'd by the exactest rules of Justice, and Righteousness. This, as it is abundantly sufficient to reconcile all the seeming Irregularities of God Almighty's Proceedings, with regard to his distribution of what we generally esteem Good or Evil; so it is deliver'd with that plainness and perspicuity, by the Account of the Gospel, as must Arm every Man with a principle of Comfort, and Satisfaction, under all the Difficulties, and Pressures of Life that can befall him. Whatever may be his Lot here, he knows it is only design'd as his Tryal, and he considers with triumph that *these light Afflictions which last but for a Moment*, will add immensely to the Glories of a Crown, *which God the righteous Judge will give him at that*

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that Day, and work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

I Do not pretend that the Notion of a future and final Judgment is alone to be found in the Doctrines of the Gospel; certain it is, some rude and general thoughts of it have been entertain'd by all Mankind. Nor does the End propos'd, by mentioning this Doctrine as one of the perfections of the Gospel, at all require this. It is sufficient to our purpose, that the Gospel is fuller, and more particular in this matter, than any other Writings, and therefore Evidences on that Account its greater Perfection.

THE Person who is said to be the Judge by it, is God himself, who as he was united in the Person of our Blessed Lord to the Human Nature, will appear, when he comes to Judge the World, visibly unto us. In the Language of the same our Blessed Lord himself, we are told, that *when he shall come in his Glory, and all the Holy Angels with him, he shall sit on the Throne of his Glory. Before him shall be gather'd all Nations, and he shall separate one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats. The Sheep he shall set on his right Hand, but the Goats on the left. The first Sentence he will pass, will be to those on his right Hand; Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. That to those on his left Hand, the dreadful, and irreverfible one of, Depart you Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. The Consequence of which Sentences will be, that the one shall go away*
Mat. xxvi. into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal. This is the Account

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Account given us of this great and solemn Process, by our Blessed Lord himself.

THE Laws of Christianity extending to our Thoughts, as well as Words and Actions, the Judgment pass'd on this great Day will be form'd agreeable, and not only the overt Act, but the inward Intention of the Mind will be equally Consider'd. This is expressly the Doctrine of the Gospel, *every Work, and every secret Thought will be brought into Judgment.* The infinite Wisdom of the Judge will, in this Respect, make this Tribunal exceed all others: for as that alone could render him capable of taking cognizance of any thing of that kind; so the exact Account he has taken of every secret Spring and Design of the Mind, will abundantly vindicate the Righteousness and Equity of his Judgment. However the decisions of humane Laws may be Justify'd in having their chief and main Regard to the overt Act, as that by which they presume the Malice, and Malignity of the Mind; yet as this Rule must sometimes fail, and the Judgment form'd from thence consequently err; could the Wickedness and Malice of the Heart be judg'd of, abstracted from such external Indications, undoubtedly both the Law, and the Judgment form'd from them would be more perfect. But to search the Heart being only to be done by God Almighty, all Judgment of that kind must be left to his Tribunal, where the secrets of all Hearts will be Naked, and Open, and by the Sentence that will be pronounc'd from thence, expos'd to the View of Men and Angels.

THEY whose just Fears of that dreadful Sentence of everlasting Fire, pronounc'd against the Wicked, make them fond of disputing it away, tell us, it is
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inconsistent with the Goodness and Equity of God, to punish a temporal Crime with eternal Torments: But such Men would do well to consider, that tho' Time and Eternity can never be made to be Commensurate, yet infinite Malice, and infinite Punishment may; and it is very Just, that the Wretch who wants nothing but the Opportunity of Sinning for ever, should for such the Malice, and Wickedness of his Heart, be Tormented for ever. I am very sorry, in answer to this, to find it ask'd by a very great Man, whom some love to quote in this Argument, Who can know this? because when God Almighty is the Judge, the Question seems to me little less than Atheism, or at least, to limit his infinite Wisdom. The distinction too of God Almighty's being better than his Word, if he should not at last Punish the Wicked to Eternity, is in my Thoughts too fine, and subtil, for any Man to trust his Salvation on it; and tho' it is confess'd, he has receded from his Threats in the Case of Repentance in this World, yet this is not being, as is fondly represented, better, but just as good as his Word, and according to his Promise, forgiving those that are Penitent, tho' their Sins were as Scarlet. I mention not this to expose, or blacken any Character, which perhaps, in other Instances may be Valuable; but I must own, I don't love to see the great Sanctions of the Gospel play'd with, and Miscreants, who want to laugh the Thoughts of them out of the World, able to mention great Men for their Authors. If what is here said is a Secret to any in the Person alluded to, believe me, none is more desirous it should be so than my self; but so spreading has been the Poison, of what the Press has given a sort of Immortality to, tho' perhaps at first but very carelessly deliver'd, that no regard to any Character can excuse the not opposing Errors of so pernicious a Consequence.

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UPON the whole, the Christian Doctrine teacheth us to believe God Almighty at present the Governour, and that he will hereafter be the Judge of the World; that so exact and extensive is the Cognisance he takes of all we say, and do, as to reach the very Secrets of our Hearts, and set them down in his Book (for so the Gospel represents this matter to us) that nothing therefore can possibly escape his Notice, and consequently his Judgment, which will turn only on the distinctions of Good, and Evil: This being the great and fix'd Principle of our Lives. A Principle that we ought always to have in our Thoughts, it must at once be readily admitted, no Argument can be possibly contriv'd, to enforce and encourage Virtue, and affright, and deter from Vice, with greater Strength, than what may by the most Natural and easy deductions be drawn from thence. Where is the Wretch so abandon'd and senseless, who believes a God, and does not fear his Power? Reason as well as Revelation assures us, there can be no shelter from Almighty Vengeance; nothing can elude this Power, because nothing can be secret to the Eye of him that sees all things, and that God which will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thought, whether it be good, or whether it be bad, cannot be deceiv'd. In short, if we do well, by this Doctrine we know our Reward; if ill, our Punishment. The two great Springs on which all human Actions turn, Hope, and Fear, have here their constant Exercise; to Engage the one, a Crown of Life, to Affright the other, Eternal Perdition.

BESIDES the Consideration of divine Providence, as now Governing and Superintending, and at last Judging the World, which we would chiefly urge;
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Our Blessed Lord, in his Gospel, has propos'd some other, which take their Force even from our real Interests, and Happiness in this World; but these we shall have a proper Opportunity to examine, in that which we observ'd as the Third and last Mark of the Perfection of the Gospel, viz. In the Rules it lays down for the proper Government, and Conduct of our selves.

'Tis the Observation of St. Paul concerning the Gospel, that *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, and Worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World.* To live Godly is the Duty we owe to God, and his Worship; Righteously, that of Equity, and Justice we owe to our Neighbour; but the living, as the Apostle here calls it, Soberly, if no more, at least regards the Duty we owe to our Selves. By Sobriety we are to understand such a thorough Command, and Regulation of all our Passions, as at once subjects them to our Reason, and Happiness. As it is apply'd to the Mind, it shows itself in the exactest Composure, and Serenity, and is ever oppos'd to the Hurry and perturbation, which confuses, and distracts our Thoughts. It is Prudent and Sagacious, and never leaves us open to the Attacks of Surprise, and Consternation. Under the temptations of our Lusts, it sets us on our Guard, and so entirely secures us from the Excesses of Riot, and Drunkenness, Lewdness, and Debauchery, that it will not so much as give them admittance into our Thoughts, without the checks of Horror, and Detestation. Would you enjoy the whole of this World's Happiness, a sound Body, and a sound Mind, be Sober; every instance of Excess throws not only a Stupor, and Confusion

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on all the Powers of the Mind, but loads the Body with Pains and Diseases. *Godliness with Contentment is great Gain*, and what is Contentment, but a sober and sedate Consideration of the Nature, and use of all Earthly Enjoyments, and such a consequent regulation of our Desires towards them, as makes us easy under every thing. *Blessed are the Meek*, says our Lord, *for they shall Inherit the Earth*; and undoubtedly, only that Sobriety, and Composure of Mind, which the Meek Man is always possess'd of, can give a true taste of even the Enjoyments of this Life. The Surfeits of Luxury, and Debauchery, rather give Pain than Pleasure, and even our Appetites themselves are pall'd and destroy'd, by our exceeding the bounds of Duty, and Sobriety. To advise a Man to live Soberly then, is to bid him at once pursue his Reason, and his Happiness; his Reason, as that is always in its greatest Glory and Splendour, when we are calm and compos'd; and his Happiness, as that only is to be found in the government of his Passions, and Appetites by the rules of Religion and Virtue. In a Word, to live Soberly according to the rules of the Gospel, is to *cleanse our selves from all Filthiness, both of the Flesh and Spirit*: In our Thoughts, to be always Easy, Serene, Pure, and Spotless; in our Words, to be Sedate, Prudent, and Useful to all that hear us; never guilty of evil Speaking, Lying, and Slandering, laying it down for an infallible Rule, that he who would *seem to be Religious, and brideth not his Tongue, that Man's Religion is vain*; and lastly, in our Actions, setting not only the brightest, and most holy Example to others, but by the regularity of our Conduct turning every thing into a Blessing to our selves; by our Temperance and Chastity, not only avoiding the pains and diseases of Surfeit, and Debauchery,

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bauchery, but enjoying even what the most Luxuriant esteem the Pleasures of Life with a double Gust. The Prescriptions of the Gospel will, upon Examination, be found, not only the surest preservative of the Soul, but the best of Recipes for the health of the Body. It abridges us of nothing but what will make us Miserable; and prescribes nothing, but what is in reality the very Perfection, and Beauty of our Nature.

UNDOUBTEDLY, he that would know the full of the Perfection of the Gospel, must learn it from a continual Study, and Attention on the Book itself. This, as it is, in some measure every Body's Duty, so it will be found the best way of convincing us of the Beauty and Excellence of all its Doctrines. A Life thus employ'd will be found well, and profitably spent, and every Day will afford some reason to admire the Wisdom, and Goodness of God, in such a gracious and ample Declaration of his Will. If what has been presented in these Papers, contributes to the exciting us to such a Noble Study, tho' I should have been never so deficient, the failure will be easily supply'd by your own Examinations. 'Tis impossible carefully and diligently to read your Bible, but you must of your selves infer the Divinity of its Author. So perfect and just are the Laws of its Righteousness, so holy and pure the Offices of its Worship, so every way it is fitted to advance the Dignity and Happiness of human Nature, and so immense are its Rewards for our Encouragement to the practise of the strictest Virtue; that every violation of its Precepts carries not only in it the highest Impiety, but the greatest Folly and Opposition to our Reason, and Happiness.

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THE Particulars here laid before you, in order to evince the Perfection, and Excellence of the Doctrines of the Gospel; tho' they come extreamly short of what may, and has been urg'd on this Occasion, from better and abler Pens: Yet I cannot but promise my self, what has been said will prove thus much, that nothing less than God could be the Author of the Gospel; as nothing but the most holy, and pure Mind could Dictate, and Enforce in such a manner, Laws of such exact Purity, and Holiness. Effects we all know will agree with their proper Causes, and we think we have reason to judge of the one by the other. A Body of Laws so perfect in every kind, that give us such just and awful Notions of God, and his Worship; Rules so wise, and exactly Righteous, with regard to our Commerce with one another, and that fix such an excellent Method of OEconomy in the Managing, and Government of our selves, as must appear to every discerning Mind in what has been here observ'd in the Gospel, must surely therefore speak it to flow from the best of Beings, and could not possibly be so Fram'd and Contriv'd by any thing inferior to it.

BUT as our Blessed Lord, by the Men we have to deal with, is suggested to be either an Impostor, or an Enthusiast; before we entirely quit the Argument of the Divinity, and Perfection of the Gospel, from its Nature, and the innate Evidence it carries along with it; it may not be improper to consider yet further some of the Particulars of it, to show the Absurdity, as well as Impiety of all such as these.

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SHOULD it then be admitted in the Character of an Impostor, that he could in all parts so well cover his Deceit, as, previous to his main Design, to compose a Body of Laws so exactly perfect, and rational, as those of our Blessed Lord must, to every considering Man, appear to be: (a Supposition certainly sufficiently extravagant, and what in reason cannot be pretended to) Yet, as the End such a Person must in the Nature of the thing, be always suppos'd to pursue, is either the gratification of his Ambition, his Lust, or his Interest, and that in the Conclusion, he proposes, at least, to himself something of that kind: If upon our strict Examination, there should manifestly appear in some of the particular Doctrines of the Gospel, such a direct Opposition to every thing of this Nature, as must render it impossible for any such End to be drove at, either by our Lord, or his Followers; all rational Men must allow, and conclude, they could not be Impostors. The bare Pleasure of Deceiving has in no Instance (that all the Histories of the World have given us of Imposters) been the whole Motive; No! Some Reward they always propose to themselves, for the difficulty of the Work. Besides, in a matter of that vast Consequence in which all Mankind think themselves to be concern'd, and to have the greatest, and most Important Interest (as must sure be allow'd, in the Case of proposing such Rules of Life, by which all shall be oblig'd and bound) there is Danger as well as Difficulty; which therefore we can never suppose any cunning Fellow wou'd expose himself to, without proposing to himself something, if he carries his Point, which will compensate such Danger and Trouble. It being then evident, that every Impostor that either endeavours to, or doth Impose on Mankind,

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kind, must have some Worldly, and Carnal End by so doing; let us next Examine what End of this Nature, either our Blessed Lord, or his Apostles, could propose to themselves by what is deliver'd in the Gospel.

I might here observe that the whole of the Gospel is so Inconsistent with any possible Prospect of Success, were Imposture its Design, and the means us'd so ill Calculated to the end; that it must speak both our Lord, and his Apostles, not only the most open and bare-fac'd, but the silliest Wretches that ever set up under that Character. To be so far from flattering, and humouring the People they had to deal with, that their Laws are form'd in direct Opposition to the strongest bent of their Inclinations, and Passions. To declare not only as his own, but what he expected and required, should be the Sense of all his Followers, that his Kingdom was not of this World, nor any of the Interests thereof at all compatible therewith: These with many more such ill suited Lessons to any of the Interests, and pursuits of our Lusts, run thro' the very Spirit, and Genius of every part of the Gospel; and therefore it may be very justly Observ'd, that there is no part of the Gospel, but what abundantly speaks, that he who Compos'd it could have no possible Views of any Secular and Worldly Advantages, which every Impostor must always propose to himself; and consequently therefore our Blessed Lord could not be an Impostor. But as the enumeration of every particular, wou'd far exceed the Brevity intended, what we would chiefly insist on in the Question before us, is the particular Doctrine of our Lord concerning his Cross.

THE great Doctrine contain'd in this was, that he was to be the Lamb of God, by the alone Sacrifice of which, the Sins of the whole World were to be expiated: This in his Gospel is laid so great a Stress on, that the whole of the Religion our Lord deliver'd to the World turns, and is founded upon it. The particular Manner in which this was to be effected, he foretold to his Disciples in the plainest Words. *Behold, says he, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets, concerning the Son of Man, shall be accomplish'd. For he shall be deliver'd Luke xviii. unto the Gentiles, and shall be Mocked, and 31, 32, 33. Spitefully entreated, and spitted on. And they shall Scourge him and put him to Death, and the third Day he shall rise again.* To hazard Life, and put it very often to the greatest Dangers, may, and has been very often made to comport with the Interests and Gratifications of this World; but at once to propose a sure, and inevitable Death, and to make such a Death the finishing part of our Design, without which the whole of it can have no Being; and yet at the same time retain in our Thoughts the Enjoyments of this Life as our End by such a Proceeding, is a Contradiction in Reason, and Nature, and needs nothing to show its Absurdity, but the bare mention of it. Such then was the Case of our Blessed Lord in the Religion he propos'd to us; it was to have no Being till he dyed, and when he had shed his vital Blood on the Cross, then, and only then was the Benefit of it to result both to himself, and Followers. Could there be any Pleasure in the pains of a Crucifixion, any Ambition in the ignominy of a Cross? there needs not reasoning sure in such a Case, our very Senses with Horror give the Answer!

AND

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AND as the Christian Religion was in its very Nature and Design, to be founded in the Blood of its Author ; so its first Propagation in the World by the Followers of him, was to meet with the same hard Fate. What was said by one of them, might with the justest Reason be apply'd to them all. *If in this Life only they had hope, they were of all Men most Miserable.* This was not accidental, and what they were Surpriz'd with, but what they knew of, and were abundantly warn'd of by their Master before they engag'd in their Task. Stripes and Imprisonment, Death in all the frightful variety of its Terrors, were things they were often told they must expect in this World as the only rewards of their Labours. He that would not take up his Cross and follow his Lord, was expressly told, that he was not worthy of him. Nay, they were to be so far from thinking it a hardship so to do, that they were to count it a matter of Joy that they were deem'd worthy to suffer for his Sake. We cannot better Sum up this Argument of the distance of the Motives of the first Followers of our Lord, and his Doctrines, from any of the Enjoyments of this World, than in that Noble Triumph of St. Paul, concerning himself and his Sufferings. *Are they* (says he, speaking of some others who thought they might glory on that Account) *Ministers of Christ? I speak as a Fool, I am more; in Labours more abundant; in Stripes above measure; in Prisons more frequent; in Deaths oft. Of the Jews five times receiv'd I forty Stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with Rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffer'd Ship Wreck; a Night and a Day have I been in the Deep. In four-* 2 Cor. xi. 23 to 31.
neying often; in Perils of Waters, in Perils of Robbers; in Perils by mine

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own Countrymen; in Perils by the Heathen; in Perils in the City; in Perils in the Wilderness; in Perils in the Sea; in Perils among False Brethren. In Weariness and Painfulness; in Watchings often; in Hunger and Thirst; in Fastings often; in Cold and Nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the Care of all the Churches. Who is Weak, and I am not Weak? Who is Offended, and I Burn not? The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ knows that I lye not.

THO' in all the particulars of this Melancholly Narrative, it might be a peculiarity to this great Apostle; yet, in many of them, others, and indeed most of the first Christians, for several Centuries after the Death of our Lord, could say the same thing. To be a Christian, and to Suffer, were so inseparably united, that they seem'd in the early Ages of the Gospel, to have their Thoughts only taken up with that single Doctrine, and did, as 'twere, study no other Argument, than that of Dying for the Truth of their Religion.

To leave the World in order to enjoy it, is sure a Means so incompatible with the End, that none can be so ridiculous as to suppose them to go together. This were to reconcile the greatest Oppositions in Nature, and were either our Blessed Lord or his Apostles Impostors of this kind, they were certainly such as neither Reason, nor common Sense can Form any Notion of.

How remarkably different has been the Conduct of all the Impostors, History any where gives us an Account of? So steadily have they every where pursu'd their Lusts and Passions, after the Interests and
Grati-

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Gratifications of this World, that whenever their Design has been brought to bear, the least Examination will make it Apparent. As the first Incentives to their Villany have been always either their Ambition or their Lust: So, whenever they have been Successful, something has been certainly done for their Satisfaction. It would be endless to rake into all the filthy Narratives of this kind; but as the remarkable Opposition they bear to that of the Gospel, may serve yet further to illustrate its Purity and Perfection, we shall a little pursue the Comparison, in the Instance of *Mahomet*.

How much his whole * Imposture was Calculated to his Ambition, not only his whole Life, but almost

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* For the Satisfaction of those who may have never seen any thing of what the *Mahometans* call their *Alcoran*, I shall transcribe the following Account from the Learned Doctor *Prideaux*, the present Dean of *Norwich*, in his History of the Life of *Mahomet*. ' After he had gotten together Nine Disciples, of which his Wife *Cadigba*, his Servant *Zayd Ebn Hareth*, and his Cousin *Ali*, the Son of *Abu Taleb* his Uncle, were the three first: By the help of these, having practis'd an austere Life for about two Years, and thereby quitted the reproaches of his former Licentiousness, and by his retiring every Morning to a Solitary Cave near *Mecca*, call'd the Cave of *Hira*, where he pretended he continued all Day in the Exercises of Prayer, Fasting, holy Meditation, and the like, having gain'd Reputation for his Sanctity; on his return Home at Night, he us'd to tell his Wife of the Visions he had seen, and strange Voices heard in his Retirement: He began in the 44th Year of his Age publicly to declare, at *Mecca*, himself a Prophet sent by God to reduce them from the Error of Paganism to the True Religion. The first Doctrine that he propagated among them was, that there

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most every Precept of his *Alcoran* Speaks. Mankind is not to be reason'd, but beat into Obedience to his Laws, and in the least to examine, is with them the worst of Infidelity. They, its true, have their Sanctions in another World, but they are of much the same Nature by which they are enforc'd in this. Is the utmost Licence in the use of Women, with every other Sensual Gratification, the reward of Obedience here? so it is in their very Paradise hereafter. The Pleasures of this, the *Alcoran* says, shall be pleasant Gardens, where many Rivers flow, and many curious Fountains send forth most pleasant Streams, nigh which they shall repose themselves on most delicate Beds, adorn'd with Gold, and precious Stones, under the shadow of the Trees of Paradise, which shall continually yield them all manner of

‘ there was but one God, and that he is to be Worship’d,
 ‘ and that all Idols are to be taken away, and their Wor-
 ‘ ship abolished; and that those who say God hath Sons or
 ‘ Daughters, or that there are any other Gods Associated
 ‘ with him, are impious, and ought to be abhorr’d. By
 ‘ denying him Sons and Associates he reflected on the
 ‘ Christians for holding the Doctrine of the Trinity, and
 ‘ that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the belief of which he
 ‘ doth in his *Alcoran* vehemently forbid. By denying
 ‘ him Daughters, he condemn’d the Idolatrous Practice of
 ‘ the *Arabians*, who Worship’d *Allat*, *Menah*, and *Al*
 ‘ *Uzza*, Female Deities which they held to be the Daugh-
 ‘ ters of God, whose Idols and Temples he afterwards every
 ‘ where destroy’d.

‘ He did not pretend to deliver to them any new Religi-
 ‘ on, but to revive the old One, which God gave first to *A-*
 ‘ *dam*, and when lost in the Corruption of the Old World,
 ‘ restored it again by Revelation to *Abraham*, who taught
 ‘ it his Son *Ismael* their Fore-father; and that he when he
 ‘ first

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of delicious Fruits. Here too they shall enjoy most Beautiful Women, pure and clean, having black Eyes, and Countenances always fresh and white as polish'd Pearls, who shall not cast an Eye on any other but themselves, with whom they shall enjoy the continual pleasures of Love, and solace themselves with amorous Delights to all Eternity, drinking with them most delicious Liquors, and most savory and pleasant Wines, without being ever Intoxicated or over-Charg'd by them, which shall be Administred to them by beautiful Boys, who shall be continually running round their Beds to serve them up unto them in Cups of Gold, and Glassses fix'd on Diamonds. *Alcoran*, c. 3, 4, 26, 37, 43, 47, 78, 90, &c. The Nature and Genius of the Impostor may be easily gather'd from the Heaven he here proposes

' first planted himself in *Arabia*, instructed Men in the
' same Religion which he had receiv'd from *Abraham*, but
' their Posterity afterwards corrupted it into Idolatry, and
' that God had now sent him to destroy this Idolatry, and
' again restore the Religion of *Ismael* their Fore-father.
' And therefore, according to their own Doctrine, it is not
' unfitly call'd *Ismaelism* by the *Jews*, altho' they call it so
' only out of Contempt, by transposition of the Letters from
' *Islamisme*, the Name whereby the *Mahometans* themselves
' most love to call it, from the *Arabian* Word *Salama*,
' which in the fourth Conjugation is *Astama*, to enter into
' the State of Salvation; hence *Eslam*, the saving Religion,
' and MUSLIMON, or as we call it, *Musteman*, he that be-
' lieveth therein.

' He allowed both the Old, and the New Testament,
' and that *Moses* and *Jesus Christ* were Prophets sent from
' God, but that the *Jews*, and *Christians* had corrupted
' these holy Writings, and that he was sent to purge them
' from these Corruptions, and restore the Law of God to
' that

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poses for his Followers, and tho' they indeed were chiefly referr'd to the next World for their full Enjoyment of these sort of Pleasures; yet, for himself, he provided a sufficient share even in this World. They that say the fewest of his Wives, allow him to have Married 15, and others reckon them to be 21, besides a great Number of Concubines. 'Tis true, in his Law, he will allow to his Followers no more than 4 Wives, but to himself he reserv'd a Liberty without any Limitation, even from the Wives of other Men, as appears in the Case of his Wife *Zainab*, who was the Wife of his enfranchis'd Slave *Zeyd*. Such was the abominable Wickedness, and Impiety of this Impostor, that he makes even God himself to patronize his Lust, and when his scandalous Violation of the Marriage Bed had shock'd his greatest Admirers, he

‘ that purity in which it was first deliver’d; and therefore,
 ‘ most of those Passages which he takes out of the Old and
 ‘ New Testament, are related otherwise by him in his *Al-*
 ‘ *coran*, than we have them in those sacred Books. And in
 ‘ this he certainly acted wiser than our *Socinians*, with
 ‘ him denying the holy Trinity and the Divinity of our
 ‘ Saviour, yet still allow the holy Scriptures, as now in our
 ‘ Hands, to be Genuine, and Uncorrupted, with which
 ‘ their Doctrine is in the most manifest Manner totally In-
 ‘ consistent. If they had with this their Master denied the
 ‘ Scriptures which we now have, as well as the Trinity, and
 ‘ the Divinity of our Saviour, which are so evidently pro-
 ‘ ved by them, and forged others in their stead, they might
 ‘ have made their impious Hypothesis look much more plau-
 ‘ sible, than now it can possibly appear to be.

‘ He pretended to receive all his Revelations from the
 ‘ Angel *Gabriel*, and that he was sent from God on purpose
 ‘ to deliver them to him. And whereas he was subject to the
 ‘ falling Sickness, whenever the Fit was upon him, he pre-
 ‘ tended

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he tells them as from God himself, *That Zainab was Married to Mahomet, and free Liberty given him to enjoy her*; and so currently did this horrid Blasphemy, and Impiety pass, that this wretched Woman valued herself on this Account above all his other Wives, that whereas they were Married to him by their Kinsfolks, and Friends, she was Married to him by God himself, who dwells above the Seven Heavens.

As his Lust and Ambition were his predominant Passions, so whenever he had a mind to something for their Gratification, out comes a pretended Revelation to back and encourage it. Thus when his jealous Wives *Ayesha* and *Haphsa* had caught him in the very act of Adultery, and notwithstanding the most solemn Oaths to the contrary, still went on to repeat

‘tended it to be a Trance, and that then the Angel *Gabriel* was come from God with some new Revelation unto him, the splendour of whose Appearance being not able to bear, this caused him to fall into those Trances, in which the Angel conversed with him, and delivered to him those Messages from God, which he was sent to reveal unto him.

‘His pretended Revelations he put into several Chapters, the Collection of which make up his *Alcoran*, which is the Bible of the *Mahometans*. The Original of this Book he taught them was laid up in the Archives of Heaven, and that the Angel *Gabriel* brought him the Copy of it, Chapter by Chapter, according as occasion required they should be published to the People. Part of these he Published at *Mecca*, before his Flight from thence; and the other Part at *Medina*, which he did after this manner. When he had forged a New Chapter, which he intended to publish, he first dictated it to his Secretary, and then delivered the Written Paper to be read to his Followers
‘till

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repeat the Practice: On their reproaching him at once with his Perjury and Adultery, to save the whole Matter, out comes the Sixty Sixth Chapter of the *Alcoran*, wherein he brings in God allowing *Mahomet*, and his Mufslmans to lye with their Maids when they will, notwithstanding their Wives. The Chapter itself begins thus, *O Prophet, why dost thou forbid what God hath allowed thee, that thou may'st please thy Wives? God hath granted unto you to lye with your Maid Servants.*

THE first Part of this Impostor's Life was taken chiefly up in the attainments of Power, and Dominion; and the gaining either of those, for the Gratification of his Brutal Appetites, is what is so thoroughly interwoven in the whole of his *Alcoran*, that

till they had learned it by Heart; which being done, he had the Paper brought to him again, which he laid up in a Chest, which he called the Chest of his Apostleship. This he did, I suppose, in imitation of the Ark or holy Chest among the Jews, in which the Authentick Copy of their Law was repositied. This Chest he left in the keeping of *Haphsa* one of his Wives, and out of it after his Death, was the *Alcoran* compiled, in the same manner as *Homer's Rhapsodies* were, out of the loose Poems of that Poet. *Abu Beker*, who succeeded the Impostor, first made the Collection. For when *Mosalema*, who in the last Year of *Mahomet* set up for a Prophet as well as he, had, in hopes of the same Success, in like manner composed an *Alcoran*, and Published it in a Book to his Followers; *Abu Beker* thought it necessary to Publish *Mahomet's* also in the same manner, and that not only in Opposition to the New Impostor, but also for the better supporting that which he adher'd to; and therefore having recourse to *Haphsa's* Chest, partly out of the Papers which he found there, and partly out of the Memory of those who had learned

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that there is not any one Part of it scarcely to be found, where the one, or the other does not appear to be his end. The many Laws for Blood and War, none can be unacquainted with, who have read the *Alcoran*, and it seems to propose no Image of Happiness either in this Life, or the next, where an unbounded, and Licentious Use of Women is not made the chiefest Part. There are several Chapters in it purely calculated to his own particular Gratification that way, besides the Instances we have mention'd, and in his more advanc'd Years to such an extravagant and monstrous degree was his Lust grown, that he seem'd to be totally Sunk, and dissolv'd in it. The Accounts that are given of him are astonishing; he is said to have in Venery the strength of 40 Men, and knew all his Wives, when he had 11 of them, in an Hour's time.

T H E R E

' learned them by Heart, when the Impostor first deliver'd
' them unto them, Compos'd the Book. For several of
' those Papers being lost, and others so defaced as not to be
' read, he was forced to take in the Assistance of those, who
' pretended to remember what the Impostor had taught
' them, to make up the matter, and under this pretence
' made use of their Advice to frame the Book, as he thought
' would best answer his purpose. When the Work was
' Compleated, he caus'd the Original to be laid up in the
' same Chest, out of which he had Compiled it, which he
' still continued in the keeping of *Haphsa*, and delivered
' out Copies of it among his Followers. But the Book had
' not long been Published, but so many various readings
' were got into the Copies, and so many Absurdities discovered in the Book itself, that when *Othman* came to be
' Caliph, he found it necessary to call it in again to be lick'd
' into a better Shape; and therefore having Commanded all
' to bring in their Copies, under pretence of Correcting
' them by the Original in the keeping of *Haphsa*, he caus'd
' them

THERE were only two Conditions of Peace allow'd by him in his *Alcoran* to those whom they Conquer, either that they turn to his Religion, or pay him Tribute. They that did the former are to be admitted into all the Privileges, and Liberties with the rest of his Followers; but the latter were only to have their Persons and Goods protected, and the free Exercise of their Religion, without any other Privilege or Advantage. But as most of the Laws of his *Alcoran* were mainly adapted to the particular bent of either his Lust or Ambition at the time they were made; so as the Nature and Circumstances of things often oblig'd him to vary his Purposes, the pretended Revelations he deliver'd were forc'd agreeably to vary; and hence it is, that the many Contradictions in the *Alcoran* are so very apparent, that the Doctors of the *Mahometans* themselves have reckon'd up in the whole *Alcoran*, 150 Verses, which are to be, as they term it, *revoked*, on the Account of their being flatly Contradictory, and inconsistent with many others.

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‘ them all to be burnt, and then Published that *Alcoran*
 ‘ anew modelled by him, which we now have, of which
 ‘ having ordered four Copies to be written out fair, he de-
 ‘ posited the first of them at *Mecca*, and the second at *Me-*
 ‘ *dina*, the third he sent into *Erac*, or *Chaldea*, and the
 ‘ fourth into *Syria*. The three first were after a while lost,
 ‘ but the last of them several Ages after was said to be pre-
 ‘ served at *Damascus*, in a Mosque there, which had for-
 ‘ merly been the Church of St. *John the Baptist*. This was
 ‘ done in the 32 Year of the Hegira, Anno 652, 21 Years
 ‘ after the Death of the Impostor; after which time the
 ‘ Book underwent no other Correction.

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IN the Comparison of things so directly Opposite, as were both the Character, and Laws of this vile Impostor, to that of our Blessed Lord, and his Doctrines, the meanest Understanding will readily see the Difference. The Wickedness and Impiety of the one so evidently opposes itself to the Purity, and Perfection of the other, that it is impossible at the first view to esteem their different Authors, any thing else but the reverse of each other; and consequently as *Mahomet* was apparently a Cheat and Impostor, from the Nature, and Genius both of his Person, and Laws; our Blessed Lord by parity of Reason could not be so denominated, because in both those particulars he was so directly Opposite to him.

HAVING then evidently acquitted both our Lord and his Doctrines from the Charge of Imposture, let us now proceed to consider what was propos'd in the second place, the Charge of *Enthusiasm*.

THIS true, were we to measure the feats of *Enthusiasm* by the Imaginations of them who are possess'd with it, many Instances, I believe, might be produc'd parallel to what is said to have been done by our Lord. How extravagant, and wild soever what has been said by them may appear to others, yet with themselves it has always pass'd for Wise, Divine, and what not. But for any History in the World to give us one Instance of a Man, who by the bare force of *Enthusiasm*, penn'd a Body of Laws so perfectly good and rational, as are those of the Gospel, is what the boldest of our Adversaries will not pretend to. Births of this Nature are always like their Parents, Wild and Distracted, and 'tis

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'tis as possible to prove Reason and downright Madness to be the same thing in their Effects, as to reconcile *Enthusiasm*, and the Gospel in this particular.

BUT could we suppose the Nature and Wisdom of the Doctrines of the Gospel at all compatible with the Charge of our Lord, and his Followers being *Enthusiasts*; yet the matters of Fact said to be done by them, are out of any possible reach of any thing that can be thought of that Kind. The force of Fancy, and an over-heated Imagination, may induce a Man to believe what he will, or another shall persuade him to; but it is not in any Man's Power to persuade either himself, or other People, that he saw and heard such things as are said to be done in the Gospel, when really in fact nothing of that Kind was effected. Our Understanding may, but our Senses cannot be impos'd on at this rate, nor have they ever in any Instance been thus far deceiv'd.

I CANNOT here omit, for the further Illustration of this Argument, a Story that I find related by a very Ingenious Gentleman, on much the same Occasion. Take it in the Words given by himself.

" THERE was in my Remembrance a Country
" Parson, who was as good a Scholar as any of the
" Christian Apostles, not excepting *Paul* himself;
" and if he was not altogether such a *Saint*, yet he
" was a very honest good Man, all his Neighbours
" gave him that Character; and those that understood
" Preaching, said he did it very well. But for
" all this, the poor Man in his latter Days was a little
" Craz'd, and nothing wou'd serve his turn, but he
" must set up a New Sect, or rather act over a Part
" of

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“ of the Christian Scene again. Several strange No-
“ tions he had, and abundance of Disciples, who
“ believ’d so thoroughly every thing he told them,
“ that, by his Direction, they left their several
“ Trades and Occupations, and brought all their
“ Goods together to one Place, and liv’d in Com-
“ mon, and so they intended to do till the *End of all*
“ *Things*, which upon his Word, they were fully
“ perswaded was near at Hand ; and indeed there is
“ nothing in Nature to be conceiv’d so absurd,
“ which they would not have believ’d when he af-
“ fur’d them of it. Now, it happen’d that when
“ they were all together in full Expectation of some
“ Revolution, the Parson fell Sick, and finding him-
“ self like to Die, he call’d his People to him, and
“ bid them not be discourag’d at his leaving them,
“ for within three Days he would rise again, which
“ they as firmly believ’d as they did any of his o-
“ ther Doctrine ; and accordingly they attended
“ thereabouts to see the Event, taking their Turns
“ to watch Day and Night, that they might be rea-
“ dy to meet him. Their Imaginations were work’d
“ up to as high a Pitch as ’twas possible, but all
“ would not do. He never rose again (as you may
“ imagine) and they were not able to bring them-
“ selves to fancy that they saw, and convers’d with
“ him ; and so they departed Home not a little
“ Confounded, and betook themselves to their for-
“ mer way of living ; and the Sect hath never been
“ heard of since. *

W H A T was done of this kind by our late *French*
Prophets, is yet more generally known ; and tho’
O the

* Principles of *Deism*, set in a true Light, Pag. 27, 28.

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the Sect may not perhaps be totally extinct, yet none of them were ever so Mad and Senceless, as to pretend to face down the Senses of the numerous Spectators they drew together by their wild Impudence and Blasphemy; and they seem content themselves to refer the Resurrection of their Famous Doctor and Leader, to the general Resurrection of the rest of the World.

WHETHER therefore we consider the Wisdom of the Laws of the Gospel, deliver'd by our Blessed Lord, or the matters of Fact as are there faithfully recorded to have been done by him; we cannot but be very sure they could not proceed from any thing like *Enthusiasm*; and consequently a Charge of that Nature is so very ridiculous and absurd, that it must be condemn'd and rejected by the Reason of all Mankind.

PROCEED we now to the last Argument propos'd for the proof of the Truth and Divine Original of the Christian Religion, *viz.* The Success of it in the Event to this time, both as it has shown the Divine Power that always accompany'd it, and the Completion of some particular Prophecies contain'd therein.

WHAT has been hitherto offer'd was and might be justly insisted on by our Blessed Lord and his Apostles, as demonstrative and irresistible Arguments of the Truth and Divinity of the Gospel; but this last Topic is what we have better Opportunities yet more fully to enforce than they. The World has now had above Seventeen Hundred Years Experience of the Verity of what they pretended to, and several such Particulars have appear'd in its Confirmation, since it was first Promulg'd, as make Infidelity more
inex-

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inexcusable at this time than ever. I know at first thought we are very apt to believe that had we seen and heard such things as were done, and said by our Blessed Lord, it would have been impossible for us to have resisted the Force and Evidence they carry'd along with them, of his being truly what he pretended to be, the promis'd Messiah and Saviour of the World; and tho' our Blessed Lord himself does seem to indulge this Notion, by telling his Apostles that Blessed were their Eyes, and Ears, in seeing, and hearing the Things which they did, and that it was a favour which many Prophets, Righteous Men, and Kings had desired, but could not obtain; yet as he Commends and plainly Prefers those who should afterwards believe in him, without such immediate evidence from their Senses: So no doubt it may be made appear, we have in some particulars greater Reason to believe the Truth and Divinity of the Gospel, than they had who liv'd in the time when the whole of it was Transacted.

I W O U L D not be understood in the least to detract from the force of what was in the first Ages of the Gospel offer'd for the Conviction of the World; but as many of the Prejudices it then struggled with, are entirely remov'd, and some Arguments may be yet urg'd further in its favour, which then could have no Being; the whole consider'd, and duely weigh'd, it must, I think, render Infidelity as inexcusable at this time, as it was in those who were Eye-witnesses of what was done by our Blessed Lord and his Apostles.

H E that referr'd the *Jews* when assembled in Council to the Issue of Things, reason'd well. Had not the Gospel been of God, it must in the Reason
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and common Course of things, have soon dwindled to nothing. Any thing less than the Divine Power that first Reveal'd, could not have Supported it. The Success of the Gospel was a greater Miracle, than all the rest put together; and tho' this may seem strange to assert at the first View, yet I cannot but persuade my self upon a serious and full Consideration of the following Particulars, it will be allow'd by all rational Men to be Just. *viz.*

FIRST then let us consider the Genius and Character of the Persons, who were the first deliverers and propagators of the Gospel.

SECONDLY, The Means or Arguments us'd by them in order to persuade the World to believe in it.

AND lastly, the Matter of Fact itself, in the reception it found, and the particular Prophecies in it which we know to be fulfill'd.

AND first, Of the Genius and Character, &c.

'TIS true, as we have before observ'd in the Case of our Lord, we have him in his Family under the Advantages of Royal Blood, and in his Descent immediately to be trac'd from the Loyns of a Prince for whom the *Jews* had a greater Esteem, than any other that ever sat on their Throne; but so little was this known or attended to, that as his Birth had nothing of the Pumps of Royalty to make it gaz'd at, and admir'd, neither did the after-Progress of his Life gain him any other Character than that of the *Carpenter's Son*. The meanness both of his Parentage, and every other Circumstance, with the
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prejudices he labour'd under upon that Account, are so well known by all, who know any thing of the History of the Gospel, that 'tis entirely needless to expatiate thereon.

IN the Endowments of his Mind there did indeed visibly appear something very extraordinary, and uncommon in all he said; but so little did this recommend him to the Esteem of those who one would have thought would have been the first Observers, and Encouragers of the Beauties of this kind, that it only the more highten'd their Rage and Malice against him. Tho' never Man spoke as he did, yet as his Wisdom was attended with none of that Art and Cunning which is us'd by designing Men to gain their ends, and steal the Affections of its hearers, it rather gain'd Hatred than Reverence towards his Person, and made him the more despised and rejected by almost all he Convers'd with. The most bitter and subtil indeed of his Enemies could not object any thing to the Wisdom and Goodness of the Precepts he laid down; but as he never could be prevail'd on to flatter and sooth them in their Vices, all that was said by him was lost and neglected. This was the Character and Genius under which our Blessed Lord appear'd in the World; nor was it at all more Advantageous in the Persons he first chose to be his Followers and Assistants. Men in their Fortunes equally poor and despicable, forc'd to get even the common Necessaries of Life by the meanest and most servile Drudgery: Unvers'd in every thing that could make them popular, and incapable in themselves of giving any Arguments for what they deliver'd, but what they fetch'd from their Senses. *What we have heard, what we have seen, what our Hands have handled;* these were their methods of Reasoning, nor did

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they ever make use of any other, save the divine Power that evidently went along with them.

THESE were the Men, and such the Character and Genius, of those who first deliver'd what we call the Gospel, or Christian Revelation to the World; from the Consideration of which it is impossible for all the Reason and Wit of Mankind to conceive, such a Matter of Fact as the Success of the Gospel could be effected without the Assistance of that divine Power, by which they so openly and fully declared themselves to be acted; which will be fully illustrated by Considering in the Second place, The Means or Arguments us'd by them to persuade the World to believe what they declar'd to them to be true.

THO' it were exceeding easy to branch this Proposition out into a vast variety of Topics, such as the many Languages they spoke, the Miracles they did, with many other things which the brevity of these Papers forbids; yet as there was one great Argument which they mainly insisted on, in which neither they, nor those to whom they urg'd it could possibly be deceiv'd; What room we have shall be taken up in a particular Examination of that.

WHAT the Apostle says concerning the final Judgment of the World, may with equal Reason be apply'd to all the other Truths of the Gospel, and with no Variation of the force of the Reason it may be said, that there is now no Reason to doubt the real Truth and Divinity of the Gospel; God hath

given such full Testimony or Assurance
Acts xvii. thereof unto all Men, in that he hath raised
31. the Head, and Founder thereof from the
Dead. The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord from
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the Dead, as it was always inculcated by all his first Followers, as the great Medium by which they would establish, and confirm every thing else they insisted on and deliver'd: So undoubtedly upon a full Examination it will be found an Argument of sufficient Force to that End. In the Evidence given of the Truth of the Fact, to wit that he really did rise, there is such a particular force as renders it irresistible. We are told *he shew'd himself alive after his Passion, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty Days.* Acts i. 3.

Some convers'd with, others eat and drank with, Five Hundred saw him at one time; One was not satisfy'd till he felt, and in short, so ample is the Testimony given to the Truth of it, that all the Parts of the Creation seem to bear a Share therein. From Heaven the Angels ask us, *why we seek the Living among the Dead? He is not here, but he is risen.* From Earth the Rocks rend, the Graves open, and many Bodies of the Saints arise the forerunners of their Lord. From the Apostles, those chosen Witnesses for that purpose, this is their Language, *We were Eye-witnesses.* From the Soldiers who were set to Watch, not only the Declaration they made to the Chief Priests, but the very trembling and confusion they were in, proclaim'd it to the whole City.

SUCH a concurrence of Evidence, so Circumstantiated, in a matter of Fact so plain, and familiar to our Senses, as was that of the Resurrection of our Blessed Lord from the Dead, was impossible to be produc'd by any thing like Fraud or Deceit. Had our Blessed Lord indeed dy'd a private and obscure Death, and the management of his Burial been purely in the Hands of his Disciples, something of this kind might have been impos'd on the World: But

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this is what the *Jews* themselves cannot pretend to say ; both his Death and Burial were transacted in the most Publick and Visible Manner ; and even the civil Power itself was engag'd to secure the Body from being taken from the Grave where it was laid. These are Circumstances we find insisted on by the Apostles, and first Preachers of the Gospel, at a time when if they had been false, they might have been prov'd so with all the ease in the World. For could we suppose the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel so strangely infatuated and bigotted to our Blessed Lord, as to invent the Story of his Resurrection, with all the particulars of the Evidence which determin'd them to believe and declare it : yet certainly the placing of such a thing as a Guard over his Body, the Sealing up his Tomb-stone, with several other such remarkable Instances of the Care that was taken to prevent any thing of Imposture taking place, is what all the Impudence and Mad-ness in the World could not be suppos'd to have mention'd, had it not really been Truth, because things of so publick a Nature as that, must needs have been known by others as well as themselves, and the Odium of such plain and palpable Falshoods, must have crush'd the Credit and Authority of the Gospel in its very beginning. Whether the Women who first attended the Sepulchre of our Lord on the Morn of his rising, were actually told by an Angel, that he was risen ; or whether the several other Wit-nesses of his Resurrection who declar'd in the most solemn manner they had both seen and convers'd with him, spoke truth, or no, was what none could be certain of well but themselves ; but such a thing as a Guard being plac'd over his Body, notwith- standing its being confessedly taken, or at least gone from the Grave, with many other such irresistible Circum-

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Circumstances to corroborate their Evidence, which every Body was able fully to inform themselves of, renders it impossible in Reason, and the Nature of the thing, to conceive how any Falshood could pass upon the World.

As little as the Enemies of our Blessed Lord had attended to what he said in other particulars; yet his saying he should be Murder'd by them, and rise again the third Day from the Dead, was what they had taken particular Notice of, and therefore immediately on their having Crucify'd him, this was in their Thoughts, and the Methods to prevent any Deceit of that Nature. Accordingly therefore addressing themselves to *Pilate* in a Body together, they tell him, *Sir, we remember that that Deceiver said while he was yet alive, after three Days I will rise again; Command therefore that the Sepulchre be made sure until the third Day, lest his Disciples come by Night, and Steal him away, and say unto the People, He is risen from the Dead; So the last Error shall be worse than the first.* Reasoning of this Nature was allow'd by the Governour to be Just; he answers therefore, *You have a Watch, go your way, and make it as sure as you can.* So they went and *Mat. xxvii.* made the Sepulchre sure, sealing the ult. Stone, and setting a Watch.

AFTER all this uncommon precaution, the Body of our Lord being allow'd to be gone out of the Sepulchre, and thus far the *Jews* dont pretend to deny, either it must be rais'd from thence by divine Power, which was asserted by his Disciples, or else some way or other it must be convey'd from thence by Cunning and Stealth, which is what the *Jews* pretended. This indeed was all the Refuge the *Jews* could

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could have for the denying the Truth of our Lord's Resurrection; for to have given it any other turn, would not have been born at first Sight. To have pretended his Disciples had taken the Body from the Guard by Violence, would never have pass'd at all; and tho' their other pretence of their Stealing it while they Slept is ridiculous enough when it comes to be Examin'd, yet it might be suppos'd to pass more easily with the Vulgar.

LET us now consider the different Accounts of the Apostles and *Jews*, as they stand in this great Article of our Faith oppos'd to each other. While the Soldiers slept, say the latter, his Disciples stole him away. But how did they know this? The Soldiers could not be Witnesses in this Case, because they were asleep, by their own Story; whether therefore he rose from the Sepulchre himself, or was taken from thence by his Disciples, they were incompetent Witnesses, because as they Confess themselves to have been asleep when he was taken from thence, they could not indeed know any thing of the matter either way.

BUT Incompetent as they were, they are all the Evidence pretended in the Point; and if we will believe the Body of our Lord to be stolen from the Grave by his Disciples, we must do it upon the Testimony of sleeping Witnesses. I urge not the fastness of the Tomb, and the consequent Violence that must have been us'd by the Disciples, to have unseal'd and roll'd the Stone away; nor the little haste and fear they were in of their awaking, by their folding up the Linnen in which our Lord was Buried, and leaving every thing in such exact Order and Decorum before they made their Escape; because
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these are things, however Improbable and Ridiculous to believe, which yet come under a much easier Faith, than the Story of his being Stole by them in general. The short is, 'twas the best their Directors could contrive for them, and as the poor Fellows were paid for it, they kept up to their Instructions, and bore down, 'tis probable, all the Opposition it found, with the common Modesty of their Profession; and thus much for the Evidence against our Lord's Resurrection.

ON the other side, the Disciples of our Blessed Lord, tho' they were very peremptory in their Asserting he rose himself from the Grave, yet none of them pretend to be Eye-Witnesses that he really did so. The Particulars of this they ow'd wholly to the Information of that holy Spirit, by which they were enabled to give the whole Account. Thus far however they all agree and insist on, that they Saw, Convers'd with, and Felt him after he was risen, which at first Sight destroys the very End and Design of the Soldiers Testimony, in order to invalidate the Truth of our Lord's Resurrection. For should it be admitted, as they say, that the Disciples stole his Body; yet they could not restore his Life, and without this his Body being convey'd from the Grave where it was Buried, was of inconsiderable Consequence; and the Religion, his Resurrection was to have confirm'd the Truth of, must, in the Reason of the Thing, have been lost with him. In any Opposition to the particular Story of the Soldiers, is what we find the Apostles, and first Witnesses of our Lord's Resurrection, not at all concern'd; the Testimony they give chiefly relates to his being Alive, let him get from the Grave how he would, and if they were true in that particular, the Story of the
Soldiers

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Soldiers signify'd very little. That they were true in what they said thus far, is impossible but to be believ'd, if we suppose them sincere in what they related. For all the Senses of so many to be deceiv'd in a matter of Fact of that Nature, was impossible; and if they did see, hear and converse with him in so many of the common Instances of Life, as they tell us they did after his Death and Burial, it must be allow'd by all the World, they had in the Language of one of the holy Pen-men of the Gospel, many *infallible Proofs* of his being risen from the Dead.

HE that can mistrust them to be false, and insincere in their Testimony, ought in Reason to suggest something that could induce them to put such a Lye upon the World. Certain it is, if it were so, it was one of the most unprofitable ones that ever was told. It were easy to expatiate on abundance of Circumstances in this part of the Argument, as render it impossible for them to be insincere, and there needs nothing but the bare reading of the History of the Gospel, and observing the Hardships they were in Reason to expect, and actually did suffer, for bearing this Testimony, to convince any rational Man it was so.

SHOULD it be suggested that both the Evidence and Opposition thereto, here insisted on for the Truth of our Lord's Resurrection, is fetch'd only from the History of the Gospel itself, which may be partial in the Account it has given both of the Fact itself, and the Evidence which was oppos'd to the Truth of it, and since we have none of the other Accounts which may have been possibly given of this Affair, we may at least Modestly suspend our final Conclusion

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sion, as Persons ought many times to do when they have heard only one Side ; the Answer may be made:

THAT in a matter of Fact of this Nature, more competent Evidence could not be given of the Truth and Reality of it to Posterity, than by some Eye-witnesses Writing down the particulars of it ; and such were the Pen-men of the Gospel. That it is impossible in the Nature of the thing, but that they must believe the Account they have given to be true themselves, because they told the same Things in the face of the Sun, when the Persons concern'd were living, and upon the Spot, who could have detected them, had what they said been false in any one Circumstance. 'Tis true, as to that part of the Evidence given by the Gospel, of our Lord's being seen by his Apostles after his Resurrection, &c. neither the *Sanhedrin*, nor any of the other Public Persons said to be concern'd in our Lord's Death, could be able to say much ; but what the Gospel relates of their own Proceedings, most certainly they would have sufficiently Oppos'd and Confronted, had it been false. Had it not been true for Instance, that they came to a resolution in one of their Public Assemblies to apply to *Pilate* for the Securing of the Body of our Lord ; had not he granted them a Band of Soldiers to Watch it ; or lastly, had not the Body at last been Convey'd out of the Grave ; can it be imagin'd they would have suffer'd such palpable Falshoods to have pass'd upon the World, and be so Publickly and Openly insisted on to their Faces, without any Opposition ? Could Partiality of this kind have escap'd Detection ? No certainly, that Rage, and Malice which hunted them every where to Death who told these things, would not have been altogether Idle in this Particular.

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THO' therefore it should be admitted 'tis from the History of the Gospel alone we fetch the whole of our Evidence of the Truth of our Lord's Resurrection ; yet as that is so Circumstantiated in several of the Parts of it, as to render it impossible to impose a Falshood on the World, a suspension of our Belief of it on that Account (as suggested) is absurd and unreasonable, and must appear so upon Examination of Particulars to every considering Mind.

THERE being no History of the times in which our Saviour Liv'd, Dy'd, and is said to Rise again from the Dead, to be produc'd, in which there is any Contradiction made to the History of the Gospel, can never sure be advanc'd into an Argument against the Truth of it. Silence we say, and very Justly too in some Cases, gives Consent ; and certainly in the Case before us, it could never be more Justly said to do so. Where all Endeavours were us'd to crush the Credit of the Gospel ; and where there was so much Power to back those Endeavours, it is very strange the Pen should not be Employ'd ; that some Historian should not Endeavour to write the Imposture down, or at least so expose it in some of its Parts, as to sink the Credit of the Whole. Some Accounts of this Nature we own may possibly have been given ; but it is very improbable there should have ever been any such, and we hear nothing of them. Had the Truths of Christianity, and particularly that of our Lord's Resurrection so many Enemies, and none that were able to Write against it? No Age abounded more with Writing of all sorts, and yet nothing is to be produc'd of this kind, either from *Jew* or *Pagan*. *Josephus* a *Jew*, and a very considerable Historian, one that gives us a very full
Account

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Account of almost all the Persons of Public Character mention'd in the Gospel, mentions our Lord's rising the third Day from the Dead. This the *Jews* tell us was interpolated by the *Christians*; admit thus much, yet what does he say to the contrary? Can it be imagin'd he, one that so well upon all occasions acquitted his Country-men the *Jews* of all Reproaches that were cast upon them by their several Assailants, would let that of the *Christians* still hold good against them, their Murdering of the Messiah; as sure he must appear to be, if he arose, as his Disciples declar'd, and all Christians believe, from the Dead? A modest Diffidence it must be own'd is not only allowable, but in many Cases commendable; and too precipitately concluding, without sufficiently understanding the merit of the Cause, the reverse; but nothing of this kind sure can be charg'd on the Man who believes the Truth, and Reality of our Saviour's Resurrection; because, where the Evidence is so full and peremptory on one Side, and nothing is brought to Oppose it, to suspend Belief is not Care and an impartial Attendance to the Nature and Reason of things, but unreasonable Obstinacy, and stupid and senseless Infidelity.

AND this will yet further appear, when we consider in the last place, the matter of Fact itself in the reception the whole History of the Gospel found in the World, and the particular Prophecies in it, which we know to be fulfill'd.

WHAT this was, the Profession of Christianity in the several and distant parts of the World, at this time, gives us the most irresistible and sensible Demonstration. All Orders and Degrees of Men, for above fifteen Centuries have Contended for the
Truth

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Truth of it, and the Laws of all the most polite and intelligent Nations in the World, have united to Support and Establish it. There are very few so little Acquainted with the History of Christianity, as not to know at this time it appears in the greatest ebb, and seems to have lost all those dazzling Beauties, which once forc'd its way wherever it came; but even under these Disadvantages, *Europe* knows none so shameless as to deny it, but such as are the Disgrace and Scandal of Human Nature. I am very sorry *England* should breed any thing of this kind; however, none have yet prov'd so powerful against it, but that it has still been receiv'd, and maintain'd by Thousands, in spite of all Opposition, and all the Attempts that have been levell'd against it for Seventeen Hundred Years together, have not been of force to Crush or Destroy it. Our Blessed Lord's Promise and Prophecy, that *the Gates of Hell should not prevail against it*, is what is confirm'd by the Histories of all the several Ages since, and we our selves are Eye-witnesses to.

THE Fact it self, that Christianity has been entertain'd and receiv'd ever since its first Promulgation, for what it pretends to be, a true and divine Revelation of the Will of God; and that whenever it has been Preach'd, all the Prejudices and Passions of human Nature have given way to its force, and submitted to its Power; this, I say, being evident from the Accounts of all Times, ever since it has appear'd in the World, and what is manifest every Day to our Senses even at this time: The Conclusion we draw from hence is this, that the Success it had in being receiv'd by the World, as a divine Revelation, the several Circumstances consider'd, is an irresistible Demonstration, that it was truly
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of a Divine Original, and could proceed from no other Cause but God himself.

THE reasonableness of this Conclusion will readily appear, if we reflect on such Circumstances as we have before taken in, in this part of the Argument. Let us then, in order to give us the more familiar and easy Idea of the Nature and Force of the Argument, bring it down to our Senses, and supposing our selves now at this time exactly under the same Circumstances as the *Jews* were when our Lord appeared among them, let us suppose the whole Christian Scene to be presented to our View, as the Gospel, and succeeding Histories present it to us at this time; and if upon the whole, the belief of the Christian Religion having so much as a Being at this time in the World, can be owing to nothing less than Divine Power, the Conclusion we have made will be abundantly justified, and the Success Christianity has had ever since its first being reveal'd to the World, is an irresistible Argument of its Truth and Divinity.

WE are then to suppose our selves a Body of People distinguish'd from all the rest of the World by a Set of Laws deliver'd by God himself; however at this time so cramp'd and abridg'd by a Foreign Power, as to have lost several of the material and original Parts of our Polity, and in short, to be possess'd of no more of it, than what this Foreign Power thinks fit to give us. Under these Circumstances by having recourse to several of the Antient Records of our Country, we are led to have a full expectation of some great Prince to arise of our own Nation, who should deliver us from the Yoak we are under, and restore us to our first Foundation.

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WELL, this being our general and receiv'd Principle and Expectation, a Person of mean Parentage and Circumstances appears, and tells us he is the Man on whom we must cast our Eyes, and depend. The little appearance of his being the Person he pretends to, makes him minded by none but the meanest of the People, and after a Life of uncommon Misery and Affliction, brings him at last to a Vile and Ignominious Death. Notwithstanding this there appears among us twelve illiterate Poor Men who insist he was the Prince we were to expect. About the same time, or soon after, Seventy more much of the same Character, who joyntly with these, insist on all the particulars we have in the History of the Gospel concerning him.

THESE on their first setting out are made the Jest of most that hear them, but the Earnestness and Assiduity with which they push their Sentiments, making some noise among the common People, and their avow'd Design being to set up a new Religion, to the abolition of several Parts of what had been before receiv'd, and was acknowledg'd on all Sides to come from God, the governing Part of the Kingdom are alarm'd by them, and Laws consequently made for their Suppression, wherever they come.

NOTHING discourag'd by this they still go on boldly to pursue what they call their Commission, and tho' Scourging, Imprisonment, and Death is at last the Lot of almost every one of them; yet such is the Influence they have on those that hear them, as in three Years time, to gain Thousands to the same Profession, equally willing to undergo the same
Miseries

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Miseries of Life, and the most cruel and tormenting Deaths on the same Account.

THE Scene of their Progress is now no longer confin'd to *England*, all *Europe* feels the Effects of it, and tho' nothing but Poverty, Misery, and Death, are the Consequence of its Profession, wherever it appears for three Hundred Years together, and neither any visible Power nor Art is us'd for its Support; yet it bears down all Opposition; the Original Accounts of it are receiv'd as Divine, and all Orders and Degrees of Men, from the Prince to the Beggar, renounce the several Religions of their Ancestors, and receive this as the only true one in the World.

VIOLENCE and Rage failing, the Enemies of it now Attack it another way. Wild and Extravagant Heresies are hatch'd to Perplex and Confound it. Every Article of its Creed is turn'd almost into a thousand Shapes. Men of the greatest Parts and Abilities, back'd with Power, Interest, and every thing else that bears Sway in this World, continually employ'd, and bending all their Wits and Studies to overturn it this way, even to this very time; and yet still by an honest and diligent Mind, it may be found Pure and Unstain'd, as it was when it first flow'd from the clear and unfully'd Fountain of Life and Salvation.

ALL that know any thing of the History of Christianity, will readily admit this to be very far from any enlargement on the Nature of its Progress; and as when it is taken into serious Consideration, the Account must appear Surprizing, and Stupendious at first View: So most certainly it cannot be resolv'd into any thing less than Divine Power.

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Flesh and Blood, the prejudices of Education, all the Powers and Interests of the World, in short, every thing that was Human and could bend, and encline the Mind against its prevailing, was against it; all unite, and yet it still prevails, and Men, against the most violent and resolv'd Purposes of their Wills, are forc'd to receive and entertain it. They that think this to be accounted for by any thing else but Divine Power, ought to tell us what that can be; for most certainly the common and rational Rule of Judging of Causes by their Effects, can never otherwise give its Solution. Neither the Agents, nor the means that were us'd, can sure be deem'd equal thereto; the Sentiments of a Poor, Despicable, Crucify'd Man, confirm'd by twelve ignorant mean Fishermen, cannot surely be suppos'd naturally to extend thus far, had they met with no other Opposition; such deference doth not use to be paid either to such Men or their Opinions; but for them to bear the whole World before them, even in spite of its greatest Endeavours to the contrary, this certainly must be the Work of God, an Effect of this Nature of itself proclaims its Cause.

WERE a Man to make it his Study to form in his Thoughts the Idea of a Transaction, or matter of Fact that could be effected only by Divine Power; certainly in all the variety of its Parts, he could not by the greatest application, be able so much as to make a Supposition, that could come up to the real Fact of the Success of the Christian Religion. History and our own Observation must run very low with us, if they have not furnish'd us with the Knowledge of abundance of Instances, of the Care and Interposition of Divine Providence; but any that are Parallel to that constant Series, and continuation

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tinuation of it, as appear'd in all the Parts of the Propagation of the Gospel, the most enlarg'd Theory, and Reflection were vain to pretend to. This! as it was the kindest of all the Instances of Divine Providence, so 'twas the greatest, the most Permanent of all its Glories, and what it has seem'd delighted upon all Occasions, and at all times to display, and make itself manifest in, more than in any thing else.

THEY that should suggest the Success of *Mahometism*, in having been spread so widely over several and large Parts of the World, and still continuing to do so, ever since the Death of the Impostor, may be urg'd as a parallel Case, to that of the Success of the Gospel, and consequently that there is the same reason to conclude that too was, and is back'd, and accompany'd with Divine Power; need no other reply than that they are to consider not so much the Success, as the Means by which it was gain'd. *Mahometism* is not the only Instance to be produc'd of prosperous Wickedness, nor was it at all our Intent to conclude the Truth and Divinity of Christianity from its bare Success, abstracted from the Means and Agents by which it was effected, but that considering these as all United in this, and only this View, it is the Success of the Christian Religion, speaks the Divine Power that accompany'd it. The parallel of *Mahometism* with it this way, cannot in the least be pretended. As the Whole of its Laws were mainly Calculated to sooth the Lust, and Passions of the Licentious; so the Blood and Slaughter they every where found, who were not willing to Embrace them on that Account, as it was order'd by its Founder, so it every where shew'd by what Arguments it was Propagated.

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NOR is the Divine Power by which Christianity gain'd Ground in the World more evident to us even at this time, by the Success it has found; than the Divine Wisdom in the fulfilling several Prophecies made by our Blessed Lord. Of this kind, the continuance of the Gospel among us at this time, the Spreading of it over so many distant Nations, from whence it was first reveal'd, the rejection and constant train of Miseries that have ever since attended the *Jews*, and particularly the Destruction of their Temple, are so many standing Evidences of the Truth of our Blessed Lord's Predictions.

TO enter into the proof of all these Particulars, must surely be allow'd entirely needless, especially as they manifest themselves to our Senses every Day; however a particular Examination of two of them, is what will not we think be altogether useless.

FIRST then let us consider our Blessed Lord's Prophecy, concerning the Success and Continuation of the Gospel, to the End of the World.

SECONDLY, That concerning the total Destruction of the Temple at *Jerusalem*.

FIRST, as to the Success and Continuation of the Gospel. Our Blessed Lord having ask'd his Disciples, what were the Opinions of the People concerning him, as to what and who he was, is answer'd by them, *Some say, thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets*, upon which asking them who they thought him to be, he is answer'd by St. Peter, *Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God*. Pleas'd with the frankness and ingenuity

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genuity of this Confession, he immediately rejoyns, *Blessed art thou Simon Barjonas, for Flesh and Blood hath not reveal'd it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. And I say also* Mat. xvi. *unto thee, that thou art Peter, and* 13, to 19. *upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* Again, when he gave his last Commission to his Apostles after his Ascension, he Mat. xxviii. *bids them go, and teach (or Profelyte) 19, 20. all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, adding further, that he would be with them always even to the End of the World.*

THE fulness of these Words as they contain a Promise, and consequently a Prophecy of the Gospel's prevailing, and continuing to the End of the World, carry their own Evidence along with them, and were injur'd by so much as a Comment; and tho' in the Application to the matter of Fact, we cannot pretend to insist on an entire Completion of it in its utmost extent; yet as we have had the experience of its being made good for very near Seventeen Hundred Years, we have all the reason in the World, to Conclude it will continue so to be to the End of the World. Certain it is, all the Wit and Invention of Man cannot conceive any Opposition that may hereafter be made, more likely to be its Destruction, than what has been already us'd against it; and since we are at this time convinc'd by the very Evidence of our Senses, that no Endeavours have yet prevail'd, undoubtedly we have sufficient Reason to conclude, none ever will.

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THAT any thing of bare human Sagacity could foresee such an Event as this, not one Circumstance of the Beginnings of the Gospel could render in the least rational. As the reception it immediately found in the World was very unpromising of any thing of this kind; so indeed it was such as could not but in reason be expected. Such a Promise and consequent Prophecy therefore could be owing to nothing less than infinite Wisdom, which, as it was back'd with a Power that was equal, could therefore be sure of an Event, and give the World such a previous Account of it.

THE Second Instance, the Destruction of the Temple, is foretold by our Blessed Lord, in such particular and full Expressions, that there seems no other difference in the Language of the Prophecy, and that of the History of its Destruction, than the time, as one speaks of it to be done very soon, and the other as actually done.

THUS the Evangelist St. *Matthew*; as our Lord pass'd out of the Temple, and his Disciples observ'd to him the Buildings thereof, he said unto them, *See you not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* And when he was riding in Triumph to *Jerusalem*, when he was come near to it, says St. *Luke*, he wept over it, saying, *If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy Day, the things that belong to thy Peace! but now are they hid from thine Eyes. For the Days shall come upon thee that thine Enemies shall cast a Trench about thee, and compass the round, and keep thee in on every Side, and shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee, and they*

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they shall not leave in thee one Stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy Visitation. Verily I say unto you, this Generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled; Heaven, and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away.

Mat. xxiv.

Luke xix.

THE Truth of what our Blessed Lord delivers, with the unexempl'd Misery and Destruction of the wretched People of whom this Prediction was made, let their own Historian speak. "The City (* says "he) well nigh Depopulated with a devouring Famine, and the Miseries of it not to be number'd, "or express'd; it was enough to create a War in a "Family to have but any Jealousy of Meat in it, "and enough to break the tenderest Friendships in "Nature. Those that were evidently starv'd to "Death, could not be believ'd at the last Gasps, that "they dy'd for want; but they would search the "very Bosoms of the Dead for Bread, when they "had no longer any Breath in their Bodies. If they "miss'd what they look'd for, their Despair hurried them up and down raging like Mad-Dogs, and "staggering like so many Drunken Men, ransacking "the same Houses at every Nook and Corner of them "over and over again, nothing coming amiss to "them which the foulest of Brutes would boggle at. "Girdles, Shoe Leather, Beasts Skins, &c. nay a "handful of old Hay was Sold for four Atticks. Again, This was in fine the issue of the Siege; and "when the Soldiers had neither Rapine, nor Bloodshed for their Spleen to work upon (as they would "not have been idle, if they had matter) Titus ordered'd

† Wars of the Jews, Book vii. cap. 6. cap. 18.

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“ der’d them to lay the City and Temple level with
 “ the Ground; and to leave nothing standing but
 “ the three famous Turrets, *Phasaël*, *Hippicos*, and
 “ *Mariamne*, that over top’d all the rest, and a piece
 “ of the Wall to the Westward of the Town, where
 “ he design’d a Garison. The *Towers* to remain as so
 “ many Monuments to Posterity, of the *Romans*
 “ Power and Conduct in the taking of them. This
 “ Order was punctually Executed, and all the rest
 “ laid so flat, that the Place look’d as if it had never
 “ been Inhabited. This was the end of the *Jerusa-*
 “ *lem* Faction, and Mad and Seditious People: And
 “ this also was the end of the most Glorious City in
 “ the Universe.” He tells us further in another
 Place: “ The Number of the Prisoners during the
 “ War, were Ninety Seven Thousand, and the Num-
 “ ber of the Dead, Eleven Hundred Thousand; the
 “ greater part of them *Jews* by Nation, tho’ not
 “ Natives of *Judea*. ”

As the exact Correspondence between the Prophe-
 cy of our Lord, and this Account of *Josephus* con-
 cerning the Destruction of this wretched People, and
 their Temple, presents itself at first View: So both
 his Divinity and Veracity are exhibited thereby
 with such glaring Evidence, that *Julian* the Apostate
 was so Solicitous about destroying the Credit and
 Validity thereof, that he employ’d both the Power
 and Wealth of the *Roman* Empire, to the single
 frustration of one Part or Passage contain’d in the
 Prediction.

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OUR Blessed Lord being so punctual in his Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple at *Jerusalem*, as to declare *there should not be left so much as one Stone upon another but should be thrown down*. *Julian* the Emperor, in order to invalidate this part of his Prophecy, gives strict Orders for the re-building of the Temple; but no sooner was it attempted, but Balls or Globes of Fire burst out of the Earth where they began to Work, and destroy'd both what was Built, and those concern'd in it, till at length the whole Undertaking was wholly desisted.

THE Truth of this particular we have attested not only by several of the Antient and Christian Writers, such as *Socrates Scholasticus*, *Sozomen*, *St. Chrysostom*, &c. but the very Words of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, a Pagan Writer, and one who at the time when this happen'd, serv'd under *Julian* in his Wars in the East.

HIS Words, as Translated by Doctor *Prideaux*, are these, viz. “ *Julian* having a Design to re-build with
“ an extraordinary Expence the Temple of *Jerusalem*,
“ formerly a very stately Structure, (which
“ first *Vespasian*, and afterwards *Titus* laying Siege
“ thereto, was after many Conflicts, at length with
“ difficulty taken and destroy'd) committed the Care
“ of the Business to *Alypius* the *Antiochian*, who
“ formerly had been *Propraefect* of *Britany*, to be
“ with all Speed Expedited by him. But as *Alypius* was
“ diligently pressing on the Work, and the Governor
“ of the Province helping him therein, dreadful
“ Balls of Fire breaking forth from the Foundation
“ of the Building, did, by their frequent Eruptions,
“ make the Place inaccessible, the Workmen being
several

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“ several times destroy’d by the Fire, as they went
 “ to their Labour, and by this means, the Element
 “ still persisting as of purpose to obstruct it, the Work
 “ ceased ” *

NOR is the present miserable Condition of the People less Remarkable, than the continu’d ruin of the Temple and City they once so much Glory’d in. For as they who Travel that Way have not so much as a Mark to find out where they stood, so total is its Ruin ; neither is there any Nation under Heaven in which they have any thing like a Governing Power. Look over all the Inhabitants of the Earth, and you will not find any of them so visibly abandon’d as they ; they are hated every where, and there are but very few Places will so much as tolerate either them or their Law. As to the Ground on which the Temple once stood, ’tis now Polluted with a *Mahometan* Mosque, built there by *Omar*, the Second Successor of *Mahomet*, above a Thousand Years ago, which continues there to this Day.

How many and how great have been the Disappointments of this Wretched People, in yet expecting
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* *Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam Templum, quod post multa & interneciva certamina, obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito, agre est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus excogitabat immodicis, negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochensi, qui olim Britannos curaverat pro Praefectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque Provinciae Rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus, inaccessum, hocque modo Elemento destinatus repellente cessavit inceptum. Marcel. lib. 23. cap. 1.*

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the Coming of the Messiah, and what infinite Misery and Slaughter they have subjected themselves to on that Account, History gives us repeated and doleful Accounts. However, they have been obstinately bent at all times against the acknowledging and receiving the True One, yet have they been the easy Prey of every Impostor, who has had the Vanity and Impudence to set up under that Character. In fine, as the present Being and Continuance of the Christian Religion, and every single Person that now says the Apostles Creed, are standing and living Monuments of the Truth and Wisdom of that God who first deliver'd it : So the remarkable Misery of these wretched and besotted People, to whom it was first deliver'd in rejecting it, evidently shew, how immediately his vindictive Justice esteem'd itself concern'd to punish their unreasonable Obstinacy, and Infidelity. The medium of Proof in this Case is the same as it was in the first Ages of the Gospel, and we need go no further for it than our Senses; we see these Particulars with our Eyes, and every Day proclaims them to our Ears. Since then we cannot but know these Things, how is it possible to resist that which is the Natural Consequence, the Belief of the Divinity and Truth of Christianity? What possible rational Evidence can be given us of the Truth of any thing more than that of Christianity in all its Parts has done? We hope, from what has been said in the beginning of these Papers, it must appear reasonable in the general, that God Almighty should reveal himself to his Creatures; both his own and our Nature render it necessary; and when we add to this the Evidence he has given us, that he has so reveal'd himself to us by the Gospel, certainly Infidelity at this time is the most absurd and unreasonable thing in the World.

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THE meanest Reasoner thinks he can easily read the Being or Existence of God in the Book of his Creatures; the Hypotheses contrary to this have no sooner been known than generally exploded, and sunk under the Burden of their own Weakness, and Absurdity; and in what part of this Book are we more assur'd of this great Truth, and where can it more manifestly appear, than in the Gospel? Should we consider it in its whole Progress? Can it be imagin'd that God would either permit or connive at such a Concurrence of Evidence, down from the Antient Prophets, the Confirmation of Miracles, the Nature and Excellency of its Laws, even to its present Being among us to this time, were it not what it justly pretends to be, a full and thorough Declaration of his Will, and Revelation of it? Where can Almighty Wisdom be more apparent, than in that Part which we call the Prophets Testimony? What greater and surer demonstration of Almighty Power than the Miraculous Part? How can infinite Goodness be more resplendently Display'd, than in the Legislative? And lastly, By what ways can all the Power, and Invention of human Reason conceive each, and all of these Divine Attributes could be exhibited to us, in a plainer manner than by the Success and Completion of the whole? Something it is true like Prophecy has been pretended in several Ages by evil Spirits in their Oracles; but how has this been manag'd, has not a study'd Ambiguity run through all their Language, and the utmost of Events only show'd the Sagacity of their Conjectures? They never ventur'd like the Prophets, produc'd in this Argument to foretell Events in the plain familiar Language of anticipated History, but always so order'd and rang'd their Expressions,

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Expressions, that if the Event should happen contrary, some pretence, at least, might be left for Evasion. Nor, which is yet a more material Difference, did they ever take in any long tract of Time, between the Prediction and the Event; the utmost History pretends to mention nothing of this kind. But in the Prophecies here produc'd, there were in many Instances above a Thousand Years distance between the Prediction and the Event, and yet so plain deliver'd, that all who read them, from the Divinity and Truth they knew contained in them, expected, and depended on their Accomplishment. Nor were they those who may be thought at this time most Interested therein, who had form'd these Expectations, but a Set of People, of all in the World, most averse to apply them in favour of the Gospel. A People, who though they still believe the Truth and Divinity of the Prophecies, and still retain the same (as they pretend) Expectations of their Accomplishment, yet continually Blaspheme the Gospel, and our Blessed Lord to whom we apply them; and by their Invincible Obstinacy therein, are no otherways to be accounted for, than as it seems a just Judgment on them for their first incorrigible Infidelity.

THE Second Argument, from the Miracles that were done, cannot surely be thought less evidently to carry with them the Hand of God. How vain and frivolous have been the pretences of Parallels, what these Papers have produc'd must sufficiently demonstrate; the end for which they were done incontestably distinguishes them from all others, and as that was manifestly the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind, both the End and Means speak

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peak God alone to be concern'd therein. And this takes in the Third Argument.

THE last, its Success and Propagation in the World even to this time, is what is brought down to our very Senses, and we see, we hear, we know it to be true. What can then now justify Infidelity, or that Modern, to be sure very wrong, Name given thereto, Free-thinking? Is this Freedom of Thought, to resist such glaring Sun-Shine? Are we to be laugh'd out of our Reason and Happiness, by a set of Miscreants who seem to have little else in them but Risibility and the Shape of Men? Is that Holy Religion, which has for Seventeen Hundred Years together Supported it self against all the united Efforts both of Cunning and Power, at last to be giggled out of the World by only the empty Levity of Boys and Children? Are these at last to be the Men to whom the great and Important Truths of our Creed must truckle, because forsooth it is not molded to the bent of their Understandings? He certainly must very ill weigh Things in the Ballance of Reason and Thought, who can part with them so lightly as this. If the Christian Religion has no other Argument on its Side, yet certainly the Believing, or not Believing must be allow'd more than a Laughing Story, were it only for the vast Weight and Importance of it, as it is in its Nature of the greatest Concernment to every Body. In all other Affairs we are not to be thus determin'd; the merriest Fellow cannot laugh us out of the Title to our Estate, nor will the greatest flow of Fancy divert our Thoughts from pursuing our just Claims that way. Or indeed, what Interests of the most inconsiderable Nature, can we be persuaded

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to part with this Way? Very sure I am 'tis not any Methods of Argument advanc'd against Christianity, more powerful than what has been formerly us'd, can more encline the present Age to Infidelity than former ones: For certainly, were Comparisons to be made of this kind, the present Generation would be found only to have more Impudence, but less Wit than their Predecessors. I am very sensible these are the Men who would be thought peculiar for the extent of their Inventions, and a reach of Understanding beyond the common stretch of human thinking; but so wretched, idle, and vain are they in these Pretences, that whenever they have ventur'd to advance any Thing against the Truth and Divinity of our Holy Religion, beyond the Boyish Levities of Sneer and Laughter, it is always some old and exploded Topic us'd by some of the Antient *Jews*, or *Pagans*, or else the impious Belchings of some Apostate or Heretic, which were no sooner known, than sham'd out of the World by the Fathers, and first Defenders of the Christian Church. Their Ignorance indeed of the Debates of this kind in the first Ages of Christianity, makes them think when they have found any Filth and Corruption of this sort, they have made some wonderful Discovery: And hence it is, the World sometimes is presented with such Pieces, as *Toland's Nazarenus*, and that which was treated with Contempt and Disdain in its first Appearance by all, passes presently for some valuable Piece of Antiquity, and the Wretch who has rak'd it together, is presently celebrated for his Performance. But as the Man who has duly weigh'd the Strength and Force of the Arguments for the Truth of the Christian Religion, will be very little liable to be mov'd by any Proceedings of this Nature: So I hope what has been here presented will

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be so far useful, as not only fully to convince him of the Truth and Reality of such a Thing as a Divine Revelation, in the General, and that of the Christian, or Gospel Revelation in particular; but of the Justice and Reasonableness of that Consequence, which we observ'd in the beginning of this Work, and what we propos'd last to consider, *viz.*

T H A T therefore Deism, or the not believing such a Thing as a Revelation of the Will of God in that which we call Religion, is the most absurd and irrational, as well as impious Notion, a Man can well entertain or be guilty of.

A N D this will yet further appear by considering the two following Particulars.

F I R S T, As the Subject Matter, or Thing to be believ'd is in it self of the greatest Weight and Importance of any Thing in the World.

A N D Secondly, That it immediately and directly concerns every single and individual Person among us. I chuse to present the absurdity and folly of Deism under this View, because the two preceding Considerations are of that Nature as to move and determine the Conduct of the most Stupid and Supine in their choice of Things.

F I R S T then let us consider the Weight and Importance of the Point before us.

I N this, nothing that we can possibly form any Idea of, can more justly be esteem'd so. The Two great Springs on which all humane Actions turn, our Hopes and Fears, have here the highest Exercise; and there

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there is not any Thing we can propose either to the one or the other, but what takes Place with greater Force and Energy, than can any ways be imagin'd in any other Case. For the first of these, our Hopes, as it is natural to them to lay before us the pleasing Prospect of such Things, as we desire to enjoy and possess, nothing sure can be more esteem'd and valu'd than the Happiness Revelation proposes. This we find to be of that Nature as to exceed every Thing we can possibly think of, and wish for in this World. The most splendid Images we generally Form of its Riches, Pleasures, and Honours, come infinitely short of what awaits us in Futurity, and here it is even our largest Desires will find Satisfaction commensurate thereto. Nor is the Greatness of the Happiness more remarkable than the Duration of it; 'tis not only an exceeding, but eternal Weight of Glory.

THIS is the first and greatest Object of our Hopes, that after this Life, there is another that infinitely exceeds it in every Instance of Happiness; 'tis further to be observ'd, that not only this Life, but the Immortality of our own Souls, from whence arises the consequent Capacity of enjoying it, is another Thing fully brought to light by the Gospel, or particular Revelation we contend for.

WHETHER a Man would chuse to be eternally happy, happy in so immense a Degree as is propos'd in the Case before us, can never sure be made a Question. So many are the Disappointments, so short and fleeting the utmost Enjoyments, and so unequal every Way to the Longings and Natural Desires of a rational Soul, is every Thing to be found in this Life, that without the Hopes and Expectations of

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another after it, of a better and more durable Kind, a wise Man would hardly wish ever to have had any Being in it. When therefore we are so assur'd of such a better and more durable Life, as we are by Revelation, it cannot but be thought a Matter of the greatest Weight and Importance, whether we may so manage, as hereafter to be enter'd and instated into it; and as the pleasing Prospect thereof must consequently be considerably the Employment of our Hopes and Endeavours to obtain it; so the Fear of losing so great a Happiness must as consequently be the Subject of our Fears.

NOR is this all neither that comes under the Consideration of our Fears. To be depriv'd of Felicity, when we have any reasonable Hopes of its Enjoyment, is what naturally gives us Anxiety, and may very justly be reduced to the Passion of Fear: But when the Case is such, that it is not only a Privation of Good, but a real and proper Infliction of Evil, it yet more sensibly affects us. And this too is the State of the Case before us; our ill Conduct here is of the worst Consequence to us this Way, and we are sure by it, not only to lose the greatest and most exalted Happiness our Nature is capable of, but to be plung'd too thereby into the most dreadful and inconceivable Degree of Misery. It is out of the reach of Language to describe what we must know and feel of this kind, if we err in our Choice; and therefore if either the Consideration of the greatest Happiness, or the greatest Misery, and the Enjoyment of the one, or Suffering of the other, are Things of Weight and Importance, certainly an Eternity of one of these must be so, and not only our Reason, but whole Nature will direct our Choice.

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AND this yet the more forcibly, when it is consider'd in the Second Place, how immediately and directly this concerns every single and individual Person among us.

THIS is a part of the Argument that comes home to us. When we are just upon the brink of a Precipice, it does not so immediately concern us, how low will be the Fall, but what we should do to avoid it. Nature, Self-Preservation, every Thing bids us recoil; and he that makes a Jest of a Point of this Nature, banters his own Destruction. There are none in all other Instances so lost to the Sense of Danger, not to look about them when all is at Stake, and sure it must put the most stupid and Senseless to a Stand, when they are told, if they advance one Step further, they are lost for ever.

As easy as some Men find it to laugh at these Things, they cannot pretend to be sure they are Fictions. They ought certainly much more carefully to have examin'd the Nature of the Evidence given for the Truth of Revelation, than they, it may be easily perceiv'd, have given themselves the Pains to do, before they venture on so bold a Presumption. Less Reason than either Eternal Salvation, or Damnation, will make them do it in all other Cases, and surely the Importance of the Thing it self, and near and dear Interest they have in it, cannot lessen their Folly and Rashness in this?

THO' when Men are not to be moved by their greatest and nearest Interest, there is very little probability other Arguments should affect them: Yet as something of this kind may be of Use to others,

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it may not be improper to take in the Comparifon between the Man, who upon the Evidence of Revelation, believes fuch different States of Futurity, and him, who only from the Bent of his Humour, and Fancy; concludes every Thing of that kind to be only Fiction, and fit only to be laugh'd at.

IT is, I muft own, fomething difficult to draw any Parallel of this kind; becaufe tho' the Men we have to deal with, are very free in their Negatives: Yet they are entirely indetermin'd what to fubftitute inftead of what they deny. Their great De- fign is to deftroy rather than build up; and there- fore, tho' it is very eafy to know what it is they do not, yet there is a great deal of Reason to think it would Pofe the greateft Doctor they have, to tell us what they do believe. That there is no fuch Thing as a Heaven or a Hell, that they are very fure of, and they are not very folicitous, fince they will allow themfelves to live like Beafts, if it be admit- ted that they dye like them too. Annihilation is more comfortable to think of than Damnation, and fo the Priests and their Revelation, is but once ad- mitted to be falfe, they will have very little Quarrel with any of the other Parts of your Creed. You muft indeed always take it for granted, that they are all Men of Wit; but you will be extreme- ly difappointed in this Part of their Character, if you expect it fhould be fhown by the Strength of their Reasoning. No, if you would take your Mea- fures of Belief from them, you muft implicitly re- folve all into the uncommon Strength, and reach of their Sagacity, and think it impoffible that a Set of bright Fellows fhould be capable of being mifta- ken.

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THEY find it indeed much easier to agree upon their Morals than their Creed, and tho' their Rules of this kind are a little perplex'd by the unluckiness, that often happens in their different Applications: Yet they think they may be pretty well express'd in the General, by *following* (as they call it) *the Dictates of Nature*; and *doing no Wrong*. By which they lay the agreeable Foundation of gratifying all their Lusts and Passions, and put themselves under no Restraint, but in such Instances as immediately bring them under the Lash of the Law of the Land. For tho' they find it easy enough for them to shake off the Thoughts, and all Consequent Apprehensions of being damn'd in another: Yet they can't bring themselves well to relish the being hang'd or pillory'd in this World; and therefore it is, amidst all the Licence they are willing to give themselves, they yet hold it necessary to keep within the Bounds of the Law, and whatever Necessities of Nature they would pretend to be determin'd by in all other Cases, the Awe of the Magistrate is still of Force with them; and tho' they fear not to dare and affront the Power of Almighty God: Yet they can by no means be persuaded to treat that of the Magistrate with the same Contempt.

THE Equity indeed of this their general Rule they give themselves very little Pains to consider; and tho' when others, by Vertue of the same Principle, take the Liberty to debauch their Wives or Daughters; they think they have a very just Reason and Provocation to cut their Throats: Yet every Thing of this kind passes smoothly with themselves, and is what they can very well reconcile to

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the Dictates both of their Nature and Conscience. Nor are the Restraints they put themselves under, in Point of what we call Property, at all different from those they have affix'd to their Pleasures; their Rule indeed, as it seems by the manner of the Expression, *doing no Wrong*, to put even what they call their Law of Nature, under this Limitation, and consequently to prohibit every Gratification of our Appetites, where such their Gratification is injurious to another: Yet as their great Principle is to have the making of every Law themselves, from whence are to be deduc'd the different and distinct Natures of Virtue and Vice; so they never tie themselves up by any real or imaginary Consequences drawn from their first and general Principle, so as to put a Stop to the Biass of their Inclinations. The Measure therefore by which either their Pleasure or Property is to be taken from, is their particular Inclinations to such or such Pursuits, and Virtue and Vice then only take place as they are made to agree or disagree therewith. 'Tis true the *Picking of Pockets, breaking open of Houses, forging of Wills, &c.* are generally agreed to be by all of them, highly Wicked and Criminal: But then they are able to give no other Reason why they think them so, but because Custom and Education has fix'd a more than ordinary Image of Horreur on our Minds concerning them, and they are so particularly distinguish'd by the Resentment of the Magistrate, as to give no Temptation, and consequently no Inclination to their Practice.

THIS their general Principle of *following Nature*, or which is the same Thing, their own Inclinations, 'tis true, thro' the various and different Passions of humane Nature give them the utmost Confusion in
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the Application, and puzzles their greatest Doctors in settling the Distinctions of Virtue and Vice: But however this, some come very easily off with, and as their own Inclination is the Standard, by which every Thing of this kind is to be try'd, very naturally condemn every Practice disagreeable thereto. Hence 'tis the Man of Licence, and Debauchery comes very readily into the Condemnation of Covetousness, and thinks no Characters black enough for an insatiable Avarice, the Soft and Effeminate wonders at the Toils of the Ambitious, and the Pleasures of his Cruelty, in making the World a Scene of Blood: In fine, every Exorbitance has its Opposite, and nothing is more common than the Zeal which clashing Crimes create against each other.

THE Conclusion of the whole then being this, That we must either *Fear God, and keep his Commandments*, or be led wholly by the wild and inconsistent Bent of our Lusts and Passions; that we must in short follow *the Law of our Members*, or *the Law of our Mind*, after the Beauty and Strength of the latter, and the Confusion and Misery of the former, has been thus represented, there needs not, sure, any Hesitation in the Choice. The different Objects propos'd in the Comparison, are no less than that of *Life and Death*, Order and Confusion, Happiness and Misery, and that too, not only Temporal, but Eternal.

THUS Reader, have I endeavour'd, as well as was consistent with my mean Abilities, to lay before you such Reasons, and Arguments as are, I hope, sufficient to prove, not only the Unreasonableness of Deism, but the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion. Should what is here done
come

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come into the Hands of any, who through the Licence of the Age, or an unhappy Levity and Inco-
 gitancy of their own Dispositions, have been led to
 entertain vile and disrespectful Thoughts thereof,
 'tis sure very reasonable to hope they will be pre-
 vail'd on to speak of it with more Modesty and
 Caution, than they have lately us'd themselves to
 do. Most certainly, Blasphemy and Prophaneness
 are Arguments can never be thought sufficient An-
 swers to what is here deliver'd, and what Freedom
 soever they may take in their Thoughts: Yet com-
 mon Shame might, one would think, reduce them
 to some Decency in their Language. Whatever
 Opinion they may have of their Parts, nothing can
 be more certain, than that, as wise, and as great
 Men as they, have determin'd after the most serious
 and diligent Examination, very differently in this
 Matter, tho' they think fit only to laugh at it:
 And should they at last prove to have determin'd
 Wrong, they will find it but a poor Jest to dwell
 with Everlasting Burnings.

To a Man, who believes there is such a Being,
 Infinite in all Perfections, as we call God: Surely
 it must be esteem'd a Matter of some Consequence,
 whether his Laws should be despis'd and contemn'd.
 When we consider the Wisdom, and every other Per-
 fection of the Christian Dispensation; and if I may
 so speak, what particular Care and Pains God Al-
 mighty himself has been at, fully to make known
 his Mind to us, we cannot but think our showing a
 disregard to that, will be more than ordinarily re-
 sented by him. When *Iphigenia*, just ready to be
 made a Sacrifice to the Goddess *Diana*, was encom-
 pass'd by all her Friends, each of which shew'd the
 strongest throws of Passion and Agony on the sad
 Occa-

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Occasion; *Agamemnon* her Father is said to cast a Veil over his Face, to conceal under it a Grief too big to be that way express'd. The just Anger and Resentment of Almighty God, for this intolerable Insolence and Ingratitude, may not perhaps too make any visible Appearance; but very weak were the Conclusion, that therefore he took no Notice thereof; the longer the Almighty Arm is, before it strikes, when the blow does come, it falls the heavier; and as there is nothing more sensibly touches a wise Man, than to see his Admonitions (especially when they are design'd for the Good of those to whom they are apply'd) neglected and paid no regard to: So undoubtedly a Creature cannot well be suppos'd to do any Thing more provoking to its Creator, than what it must be in not only disobeying, but making a Jest of his Laws.

A Man would omit no Pains to persuade them, who are so unhappy as to be plung'd in this prodigious depth of Wickedness, to consider both their Guilt and their Danger: But such is what I can't help calling the dreadful Turn, they have given to the natural and genuine Way of thinking in humane Nature: That no Arguments that can be offered them, will affect them, and the charitable Hand that is held out for their Assistance, is turn'd back with only Scorn and Derision; all therefore we can probably flatter our Hopes with, by an Undertaking of this Nature, is to secure those who are not yet fallen into this Abyss of Misery, from the Contagion of their sad Example; and if it contributes in some mean Degree to this End, believe me Reader, I shall never repent the Pains I have taken.

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To such as these then, I would now seriously Address the small Remains of these Papers. They are now to consider the Christian Religion, not as barely what they were brought up to, and receiv'd from their Ancestors, but as fairly propos'd to their Belief, and they no further desir'd to attend thereto, than as it gives them Reason to conclude both its Truth and Divinity. What has been offer'd here to this Purpose, tho' I am very far from bringing it into any Comparison with many of the Performances of several great and more considerable Pens which have been engag'd this Way before: Yet I can't but assure my self, it will be allow'd by all considering Men, to prove beyond all Contradiction the Unreasonableness of Deism: Unreasonable upon every Account, resisting the greatest and fullest Evidence that ever yet was given to any Thing in the World; stupidly lost to all Sense of the most amiable Beauty and Perfection imaginable, and not to be mov'd, even by Miracles, and their own nearest, dearest, and most important Interest; such Men as these are indeed to be pity'd; Misery in all Shapes, will move a generous Mind thus far; But sure, of all Men they are not to be imitated. He that observes the Misery, and Diseases they generally bring upon themselves in this World, by that wild Extravagance and Debauchery their Principles indulge, may learn from the Physician, as well as the Divine, the Danger of such a Correspondence: But if he extends his Views yet further into the next, the horrible Scene which that presents him, must sure be very far from any Temptation to follow their Example. What therefore I would earnestly, and in the most affectionate Manner, press upon you, as the Result of this Discourse is, that you

would

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would not only carefully distinguish your Faith, but your Practice from that of these Men. Let them see you are able, not only to talk over, and defend, but live the Precepts of the Gospel. Had not they the Opportunity of throwing our ill Lives in our Teeth, as an Argument against the Influence and Truth of our Holy Religion, did not our irregular Practices encourage these Enemies to Blaspheme; Such would be the Native Majesty and Force of the Gospel of the blessed Jesus, that like the Glories of the Rising Sun, it would immediately disperse all these Mists and Fogs, wherever it appear'd.

LET not then this Argument, above all, be wanting from us; 'twill more effectually Silence our Enemies, than the most labour'd Methods of Art and Reasoning; and 'tis the rather to be chosen, because 'tis in every Body's Power to make use of it. The great End for which the Gospel was reveal'd to the World, was not to make us fine Disputants, but good Livers. The several Links in a long Chain of Scholastic Reasoning, are not so readily perceiv'd by all Understandings: But when agreeably to the Command of our Lord, we so let our Lights shine before Men, as that they see our good Works, they are naturally, I had almost said irresistably, led to glorify our Father which is in Heaven. But whatever might be the Effect of our Conduct upon others, very certain it is, we shall reap no Benefit ourselves from the utmost Extent of our Knowledge, without an agreeable Practice; and the larger our Attainments are that Way, the greater will be the Aggravation of our Guilt, without suitable Improvements of the other; Let us then in the Words, and agreeable to the Advice of an Apostle, use the utmost Diligence

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gence to add to our Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godlyness; and to Godlyness, Brotherly Kindness; and to Brotherly Kindness, Charity; Because only when these Things do abound in us, we shall be neither Barren nor Unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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MODERN PLEAS
FOR
ANARCHY
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REBELLION
REVIEW'D;

OR, A
Particular Examination of the
Senses put on *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*
CONCERNING
The Measures of Submission to the
CIVIL POWER.

With some Reflections on the Reasonableness, as
well as Divinity, of the old Doctrine of Passive
Obedience and Non-Resistance.

Being the whole of the WORK, and the
Third and Last P. A R T.

By JOSEPH SMITH.

*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and tell
you even weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of
Christ. Phil. iii. 18.*

L O N D O N:

Printed for RICHARD KING at the *Princes Arms*
in *St. Paul's Church-yard*. 1720.

MODERN PLEAS

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MODERN PLEAS
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THUS far we have trac'd our Modern Casuists, as they have struck at the very Foundation, and Certainty of our Holy Faith in general, and yet more openly violated, and attack'd some of its most Prime and Fundamental Articles in particular. Our former Division of the Doctrines more immediately assaulted in this manner, being of such as relate to what we ought necessarily to believe (which we call'd the Speculative Parts of our Faith) and also what we ought as necessarily to do (which

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we call the Practical Parts) the latter of these now Commences the Business of our present Consideration.

A N D here, upon the least Reflection, 'twill be found, we are as little secure in our Practice, as our Creed. Not only the Great, and important Duties of Christianity, are openly disputed and laugh'd at, as all Cant and Illusion; but even the Distinction of Good and Evil in general, is thought a Matter may bear a Debate. Such is the fatal Infatuation of the Age, that there cannot be any thing imagin'd, so Monstrous, and absurd in Faith, or black and Villanous in Practice, but what is by some Designing, or deluded Wretch or other, obtruded on the World under the specious Names of Religion, and Conscience. It is an old Complaint, but it is not yet worn out, that there was no Absurdity so great, but had some Philosopher to Vouch it: Conscience! new Light! and Reason! are now become the common Parent of every thing that's Monstrous; and not only our Faith, but our very Morals groan under the weight of some of their modern Pretenders.

A M I D S T the vast variety of Mischiefs that abound of this Nature, it would be entirely impracticable to descend to each Particular. But as when devouring Flames have seiz'd our Houses, we naturally flye to the Preservation of our most darling Treasures; so upon a little observation 'twill be found, there are some things which relate to our Christian Practice (of that vast Consequence, so distinguishingly the Characteristics of our Holy Profession) assaulted of late with that particular Violence and Outrage, as to render all Endeavours for
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their Defence and Security, equally Necessary, and indispensable. For tho' it is a fix'd and undoubted Truth, That every Practical Duty, as well as Speculative Doctrine of our Holy Profession, is of an indispensable Obligation, and ought not to be given up to any Consideration whatever: Yet it must equally be allow'd, there are some Duties more strongly inforc'd and inculcated with a more particular Energy in the Gospel, than others; Such as Love in the Active Part of our Duty. *By this shall all Men know that you are my Disciples, if you love one another*; and Love is said to be *the fulfilling of the Law*: So that as the whole of our Duty seems to be compriz'd in this single and noble Passion; so in the passive Parts of our Duty, it is said, *except we take up our Cross*, that is, are ready and willing to suffer the greatest Severities, for the Sake of our great Master, and his Doctrines, we can in no wise be deem'd his Disciples. These Two great Duties of Love, and Suffering, are throughout the Gospel, made with such a distinguishing Emphasis, the prime and darling Duties of Christianity, that the Omision of either of them, when there is a proper Call for their Exercise, is esteem'd a direct and open Contempt of the whole; and therefore, when these appear to be struck at, all that is dear and indispensable in our Religion, seems to be in Danger: And he must be dead to all Sense of our Great Lord, and his Doctrines, that can sit tamely still, and see them insulted.

THO' it were very easy to prove, there is that exact Harmony between these two necessary and essential Duties of the Christian Religion, that the least Breach of the one, necessarily breaks in upon and wounds the other: Yet because the present Dis-

putants of the Age, have not so openly contended the Duty of Love, as that of Suffering, it shall be more immediately the Business of the ensuing Papers, to consider what Reasons have been given, to make this necessary and important Duty of Christianity, of late, so very odious, and almost every where rejected.

IT was the sad Complaint of the great Apostle St. Paul, in that early Dawn of Christianity in which he liv'd, that there were some whom he had mention'd often, and then *even weeping, that were Enemies to the Cross of Christ*. Men! like those of the present Age, too well vers'd in the Laws of Nature, and Self-preservation, to bear the grating Doctrines of a Crucify'd Saviour, and more knowing, and refin'd in their Speculations, than to submit to the Dictates of a suffering Religion. Their Thoughts were big with Liberty and Freedom, and tho' they seem not so fully instructed as our Modern Casuists, in the Language of Self-Defence: Yet they were equally resolv'd not to give themselves any Pain on the Account of their Christianity, nor quit the Ease and Enjoyments of this World, to purchase its Rewards. The Observation of this Temper in them was the Cause of this passionate Complaint of the Apostle; and a just Apprehension of its Tendency and Consequences, drew Tears from the Eyes of the Holy Man, and vex'd his righteous Soul with the quickest Sense of Sorrow.

BUT whatever Advantages some may find in thus hunting out of the World these pure and peaceful Doctrines of Christianity: However necessary it may be to dress them up (as their Glorious Practitioners were of old) in the Skins of wild Beasts, to tempt

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tempt even voracious Blood-hounds to worry them : Yet when they are stript of this Disguise, and presented in the circling Beauties of their own Native Innocence ; when the Mist of Delusion and Infatuation is taken from our Eyes, and even these hard Exercises of our Duty, are painted in truly Genuine and Gospel Colours ; Suffering itself will be found to have its Charms, and the hardest Service of Christianity, will appear to be perfect Freedom, and no less than the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. Wisdom ever will, and may be justified of all her Children, and the perfect and unerring Law of God exacts nothing that is barely Arbitrary, but only adds the Sanction of its Authority, to what is in itself a reasonable Service.

BUT because we have to deal with Men in this Age, who value themselves in disputing every Thing ; and we find it branded, as ridiculous, and falsely concluded from Scripture ; and monstrous and insupportable in Reason : In order to the clearing it from these heinous Charges, and to preserve some Method in the following Papers ; it can't be improper for its thorough Vindication, to lay down these two Propositions, *viz.*

FIRST, That the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience and Non-resistance, or bearing Injuries with Patience, and Submission, is absolutely commanded by the Gospel.

SECONDLY, That this Command, in even the most absolute Extent, is highly reasonable in the Nature of Things, and as evidently founded in the rational Laws of our Nature, as the positive Injunctions of the Gospel.

IN the clearing of these, we shall have a full and compleat Opportunity of considering the Modern Methods of Reasoning in this Subject, and be able, I hope, to vindicate both our Church, and the Gospel, from that load of Reproach and Calumny, it hath of late been the Fashion to throw on them. And first, That the Doctrine, &c.

MANY are the Texts of Holy Writ, that state our Duty in this Point; but St. Peter has so fully given us the Sense and Genius of the Gospel, in its full Extent, that we might wholly determine the Issue of what we have to offer, to what he has laid down. *Submit yourselves* (says he) *to every Ordinance of Man.* 1 Pet. ii. 13. *ὑποτάγητε ἐν κυρίῳ ἀνθρώπων κτίσει.* *Omni humana creatura,* so † Grotius, i. e. as* Dr. Hamond translates it, *Be subject to every humane Creature.* And that this is the proper and genuine Sense of the Words, so as not to restrain them only to Magistrates, who are after particularly mention'd, appears by what the Apostle mentions in the Relation of Servants and Masters, where he exacts the Subjection of the former, *ὡς μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν* not only to the Good and Gentle, but to the Forward: Because to do this, is a Part of our Calling, as we are Christians. *Eā lege vocati sumus,* 'tis a Law by which we are called: so Grotius.

BUT here we are encounter'd by a || Gentleman, who hath lately made a mighty Figure in this Controversy. 'I cannot (says he) but think it ve-

† In loc. * Annot. in loc.

|| Measures of Submission, p. 124. Fourth Edit.

‘ry unreasonable, that some Writers in this Cause
‘should not be content with the plain Declarations
‘of the Scriptures, concerning Governors and Sub-
‘jects; but should alledge also, what is said by St.
‘*Peter*, with Relation to Masters and Servants, and
‘pretend to draw an Argument from thence, for ab-
‘solute Passive-Obedience in Subjects. St. *Peter* ad-
‘vises Slaves, who were in a State of perfect Cap-
‘tivity; had forfeited their Lives, and were bought
‘with a Price into the Arbitrary Power of their
‘Masters, to bear with the evil Treatment their
‘Masters might sometimes wrongfully bestow upon
‘them; putting them in Mind, that the great Glo-
‘ry of Patience, is to bear Injuries and unjust U-
‘sage, without Reviling, or Revenge: And from
‘hence some argue for absolute Submission in Sub-
‘jects: Whereas Subjects, generally speaking, are
‘not in a State of Captivity; never forfeited their
‘Lives and Fortunes to their Prince; nor ever were
‘bought with a Price into their Arbitrary Power:
‘And therefore it is absurd to suppose, he should
‘lay down the same Precepts for both”.

BUT however this Gentleman may please him-
self, and those that admire him with the Fictitious
Rambles of his own Imagination, I can’t, for my
Part, conceive what he means by thus talking of
Slaves, and their having forfeited their Lives, &c.
For whatever were the Severities of the Laws of
their Country, he will not sure Contend, they had
justly done so, without they had been guilty of
some Male-Practices. In such a Case indeed, their
Lords, or Masters, might argue, as he does in ano-
ther Case, from the greater to the less; and so
make the Rigour they us’d to them commute, for the
more Capital Punishments they had incurr’d: But

then certainly the Apostle argues strangely with them, when he tells them, *That this is Thank worthy, if a Man for Conscience toward God endure Grief, suffering wrongfully.* This surely cannot be proper Language to Men, whose Afflictions were the Effects of their Demerits: No, no, the Apostle particularly distinguishes them from such, and comfortably assures them, their Sufferings were their Glory: For (as he goes on) *What Glory is it, if when you be buffeted for your Faults, you shall take it patiently? But if when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently; this is acceptable with God.* The Apostle does not argue with them as Thieves and Robbers, Men who had forfeited their Lives to the Public Good; but as Christians who are oblig'd by the positive Law of their Profession, to submit to injury and wrong; and for their Encouragement, presents to their View the Example of the blessed Jesus himself. *For (says he) even hereunto were you called, because Christ also suffer'd for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow his Steps: Who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.*

NOR were this Conclusion at all unreasonable, if the Apostle had not been so very particular in their Case. For it must be insisted on, the Apostle does not at all make their particular Relations as Subjects, or Servants, the Reason or Ground of the Submission he enjoins, but that which is the Supreme of all Laws, the Will of God. *For so (says he) is the Will of God.* And tho' indeed he does make as 'twere a particular Induction of the several Relations, as Subjects and Servants: Yet he does not at last found their Duty at all on these particular Relations, that is, because they were Subjects, and because they were Servants (or as this Gentleman
loves

loves to call them *Slaves*) that therefore they should submit; but because even hereunto they were call'd, as they were Christians in general, abstracted from all such Relations. Their Duty is founded by the Apostle, on the Principles of their Religion, and the Reason he gives for it, and Encouragements to it, are all entirely drawn from thence.

To tell us therefore of *Slaves*, and Persons in perfect Captivity, is perfect Trifling and Amusement, were it true, since the Reason laid down by the Apostle, reaches every Christian, without there can be found any Relation we can possibly bear, that Discharges our Obligation to obey the Will of God.

I WOULD not be here so taken, as if I wholly excluded the Force of these particular Relations, in the Duty of Submission: No, undoubtedly they have their Obligations; but my Design is only to infer, that the Apostle does not in this Place make use of any Topic of this Nature, but only enforces the Duty from the Consideration of our being Christians in general, and, as such, bound hereto. In this we shall be better understood by the Opposition that is made to us. It is observed then further;

‘ THAT how invidious and indecent soever it was, St. *Peter* is not content to preach Submission to these *Slaves* in general Terms, or speak only of good Masters, as he does only of good Governors; but to put the Case of ill Nature, and hard and unreasonable Masters, in order to teach them Submission even to such Masters: From whence one would be apt to argue, that if he had intended the same, in the Case of Tyrannical Princes, he would as plainly have said so, as he doth in the
‘ Case

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‘ Case of Masters. And his Silence in that Case is
 ‘ so much the stronger Argument, because immedi-
 ‘ ately in the following Verses, he expressly menti-
 ‘ ons hard and ill-natur’d Masters, when he comes
 ‘ to treat of the Duty of Slaves.” †

BUT can it, after all, be imagin’d, the Duty of Submission in a Subject to his Prince is not as full and extensive, as that of a Servant to his Master? ’Tis not my Design to argue this Point from the particular Laws of any Nation, but the Reason and Justice of the Thing, which I cannot but think the Apostle (had he such particular Views, as here represented) would have had an Eye to; and tho’ as ’tis here observed he does not State the Case of a wicked, and tyrannical Prince, considering how sacred their Characters were always with the Holy Writers, ’tis not improbable, the indecency of such a Supposition, was the Reason of his Silence in that Particular. However it may be the Fashion of late, ’twas not the Way of the Holy Penmen, to exaggerate the Failings of Princes, but rather to take all Occasions to tell the World of the usefulness of their Office, and to make that a subordinate Reason to the particular and positive Injunction of the Gospel of the blessed Jesus, for their Submission to them.

BUT we must observe further, That the Apostle, before he had mention’d either Princes, Governors, or Masters, enjoins Christians to submit to every humane Creature, or as our Translation renders it, every Ordinance of Man; which take it which way you will, must amount to a positive and universal Law, binding Christians to a Submission of the most absolute and unlimited Extent; and that upon this

† Ibid. pag. 125.

this single Reason, because so is the Will of God, or as it is afterwards worded, *For even hereunto are we called.*

NOR are the Encouragements given to this Duty, less general and extensive, than the Reason on which it is primarily founded by the Apostle. For he does not say this is Thank worthy, and this is acceptable with God, if you who are Servants, or Slaves, when you are injur'd, take it patiently; but this is Thank worthy, if a Man, for Conscience toward God, which surely are Expressions not necessarily to be determin'd only to Slaves, and Men in perfect Captivity, even to the having forfeited their Lives, but as applicable to the very Gentleman we are contending with, as a Christian, as the meanest Slave he is pleas'd to mention, as only fit or cut out for Suffering.

BUT because 'tis here so much insisted on, That Suffering wrongfully, is only the Duty of Servants, or Slaves, and that 'tis unreasonable to apply the Apostles Words to any other Relation, such as Subjects, &c. it cannot be improper to lay this Duty before us, as it is inculcated by our blessed Lord himself, who not only enjoin'd it as a Duty on us, but as St. Peter observes, set us an Example of the Practice of it. *You have heard, that it hath been said, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth; but I say unto you that you resist not Evil, Mat. v. 38, 39.* Or, as it is in the Comment of St. Paul, *Recompense to no Man Evil for Evil; or yet more plain, Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, but rather give Place unto Wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay it saith the Lord. Rom. xii. 17, 19.* Nay, and which is more Remarkable, our blessed Lord not only

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only binds down our outward Actions to this strange Duty of Non-Resistance, but determines the very secret Springs, and Inclinations of our Hearts to a thorough Acquiescence, even while we are actually suffering every instance of the most shocking Rage, and Cruelty. He raises the Duty higher still, and commands us even to Love those who thus treat us. *You have heard* (saith he) *that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you, Matt. v. 43, 44.*

WELL therefore might St. Peter exact of Servants to submit to the hard usage of their Masters; justly might he insist on this, as the indispensable Duty of their Profession, as Christians, when his great Lord and Master had so forcibly inculcated this before. 'Tis not, you see, any New and particular Doctrine of his, but what he had been very well and fully instructed in: He knew most certainly this was acceptable to God, when he had heard his Lord tell him, and his fellow Apostles, that they should be so far from being concern'd at any ill Treatment they should find, that they should rejoice and be exceeding glad. To suffer Injury, and Abuse, was not, he was well instructed, the peculiar and mean lot of a Slave, but the true Glory, and Honour of a Christian. And therefore he cautions them against all such wrong Notions of Liberty, and earnestly advises them by their Practice to take off the Scandal of such an Imputation. *Use not* (says he) *your Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness, but as the Servants of God; let it be known to all the World, that your Religion gives you no Liberty to be Quarrelous*

relous and Revengeful, but strictly binds you down to Submission to the greatest, and most provoking Injustice; that not only your Hands are bound down from any open Violence and Outrage, but even your very Hearts are determin'd to bless your bitterest and most implacable Persecutors. This is thank worthy, this is the Will, this is acceptable to God.

THE Duty then of Suffering, and bearing Injury, and Wrong being thus universally incumbent on Christians, not any real or imagin'd Relations among them, can with the least Degree of Reason be suppos'd to dissolve the Obligation; if therefore it be under those Limitations so earnestly contended by those we are engag'd with, they must be suppos'd to arise from other Considerations, than what can be infer'd from any thing of that Nature; and therefore 'tis further argu'd:

' THE Words (of St. Peter) do not so much as infer, that even these Slaves were oblig'd in Conscience to bear all instances of Cruelty, or Injustice from their Masters, but only to be Subject to their Masters, tho' they were froward, and unreasonable, for which it would be hard to prove the necessity of Submission in every possible Case'.

IF by this is only meant, the Apostle does not particularly mention every possible Barbarity, and Cruelty might be offer'd them by their Masters; We must own he does not so particularly State the Case under the utmost Extremities; but this we may be very sure of, that both the Reason, and Encouragement

* Ibid.

agement he gives them for their Patience, are equal to every possible Case. For their being call'd there-to by their Profession as Christians, and its being ~~Χαρις~~ thank Worthy, and Laudable, and acceptable to God, were sufficient Reason, and encouragement to the Duty, were their Rigour so great, as to reach even Life itself.

NOR are there very learned Men wanting to heighten the Word *σκολιός*, or *δυσκόλως*, beyond *Morosus*, *Durus*, *Difficilis*, &c. or as our Translation renders *Froward*; for it is very well, and justly render'd by * *Truculentus*, Fierce, Bloody, Cruel, &c. By which it may be very easy to observe how little Reason this Expression had to be soften'd into *Unreasonable*, as if the Apostle only had an Eye to little Caprices, and the Starts of a fretful Humour. And tho' indeed the particular Punishments he mentions, is given by him the Name of *Buffeting*, yet sure we cannot think he had light and inconsiderable Sufferings in his Eye, when he thinks fit to remind them of the Sufferings of even our Saviour himself.

BUT however the Word *δυσκόλως*, *Froward*, or *Cruel*, may be soften'd into barely Humoursome, and Unreasonable; yet sure the Epithets our Blessed Lord gives to those whose evil Practices we are to be so far from violently Resisting, that even under the immediate Lashes of them, we are to Bless, and Pray for those who thus use us, may be extended to all possible Extremities, even to the Loss of Life it self. Very sure I am our Blessed Lord himself extended it so far, and Pray'd for those who despitefully us'd
and

* *Grotius in loc.*

and Persecuted him even to Death: and how the first Martyr St. *Stephen* Copy'd this glorious Example, his History is an undeniable Demonstration. Certain it is therefore, the Duty of Patience, and Submission is laid down in Scripture in such Terms, as to reach all possible Cases, not only of Slaves as some love to call them, but of every one that bears the Name of Christ.

THUS far then I think is irresistably plain, That to suffer Wrong, yea, the greatest of Wrong, even the loss of our Life patiently, is a Duty requir'd by the Gospel, of every Christian; and tho' when this Matter is brought to the Pinch, those we have to deal with generally think fit to Shuffle, and artfully to Comment it all away: Yet in their more sober Intervals, they are ready to own it true in the general, but then they must Cramp it with so many Limitations, that it really then only Commences a Duty, when we cannot possibly by any means avoid the Practice of it.

IN our enquiries then after what Limitations this Duty may be suppos'd to have, it must I think be allow'd a good Method to examine what means the Scripture itself allows of to be us'd to avoid the Rage, and Cruelty of those who may possibly Persecute us. And here it may easily be observ'd, the Advocates of *Passive-Obedience*, are not so totally for excluding all the means of Self-preservation, as some love to represent them; but only contend against such means of preserving their Bodies, as may endanger the eternal Salvation of their Souls. For none Contend but that a Man may use all the Prudent Methods in the World to preserve his Life, and the Wisdom of the Serpent is highly Commendable,

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ble, if it does not wholly swallow up the Innocence of the Dove: And this will the better appear, by mentioning some of those means of Preservation particularly mention'd by the Gospel, and so consequently allow'd by all.

I WILL not venture absolutely to say that there are no more, but three sorts of Means, no doubt every Christian may use for the Preservation of either his Life, or Property.

FIRST, By appealing to the Magistrate.

SECONDLY, By flying from the Rage of his Persecutor. And,

THIRDLY, By Praying earnestly to God to deliver him.

THE necessity of mentioning these must appear, because they we are engag'd with, continually charge us with taking away all Right of Self-preservation. Now most certainly each of these must be allow'd very great means of Self-preservation, and such as will effectually Answer all the ends of it, a Christian may, or ought to desire, and this will appear more plain by recurring to particulars.

FIRST then, as to the appealing to the Magistrate.

IF we are oppress'd with Injury and Wrong, it must certainly be a great Security to us, that God Almighty has Commission'd him to right us, and has been so far from denying us his assistance, that he hath both by Precept and Example warranted our Appeal

Appeal to him. In this *he is the Minister of God*, and hath the Sword put in his Hand for that purpose. How effectual this is in the general, the Experience and Laws of all Nations confirm; and the Sense of it is so universally receiv'd, that our very Adversaries give it their Suffrage, and make it not only the Reason, but Measure of their Submission. The Protection which is generally found from him, is made by them the only Reason we have to Obey him; and because it is his Office to be a Terror to evil Doers, and the Encourager of them that do well; therefore 'tis kindly allow'd by them we ought to pay him Tribute, and Obedience: Consequently (there being no Nation so Barbarous, as to be entirely without Magistrates) the Power of Appealing to the Magistrate must be allow'd a considerable means of Self-preservation.

N O W will this less appear, by recurring to such Examples as they themselves have been very busie, and officious in the mention of to us. We are told, ' That the chief Captain resolving to find out what ' it was had so much incens'd the whole Multitude ' against St. Paul, commanded him to be Scourg'd, ' in order to his own Confession of his Crime. St. ' Paul could have born this usage with as great ' Christian Patience, and Roman Fortitude, as any ' Man living; and no Man knew the true Glory of ' Suffering wrongfully better than he. But instead ' of this he seems to think it a much more becoming ' Part, to insist on those Priviledges which the Laws ' of the State entitul'd him to, as he was free of the ' City of Rome; *is it lawful for you to Scourge a Man ' that is a Roman, and uncondemn'd?* was the Question which he thought fit at that time to ask. Again, ' if (says the same Gentleman) we look back on the

xvi. Chapter, (of the *Acts*) we shall find a yet greater proof of this. The Magistrates of *Philippi* commanded *Paul* and *Silas* to be beaten with many Stripes, and cast into Prison, but the next Morning sent to the Keeper of the Prison to let them go, but *St. Paul's* answer is very observable, They have beaten us openly, uncondemn'd, being Romans, and have cast us into Prison; and now do they thrust us out Privily? Nay verily, but let them come themselves, and fetch us out, *

I LEAVE it at present to fertile Fancies to improve the modest Remonstrances, and appeals of the Apostle, into Violence and Resistance to the Magistrates, and will not interrupt them in the pleasure of supposing the Apostle with fierceness in his Countenance, and Menaces on his Tongue encountering of them. Be it the employment too of such to feign their Opposers quarrelling with the Conduct of *St. Paul*, while we only take the Passages, as an instance of that just Appeal, which the Doctrine of the Gospel allows, and the Sense of the Words will only bear; and insist on the Success that attended them, as a plain illustration how conducive such Appeals were even in those hard Times, to the righting the Injur'd, and preserving them from further Outrage. As there was nothing in his Words can conclude any more, so there was nothing in his Actions, can extend their Design to any thing else. When these ends were gain'd, we find him no longer complaining of the Injustice, nor stirring up the People to a Sense of it; nor is there any thing in the Plea itself, excepting the particular mention of his being a *Roman*, but what the meanest Slave might have

* Measures of Submission. Pag. 210. 212.

have made. The being beaten without any legal Sentence was what might certainly have been pleaded by a Slave, as well as *St. Paul*, and the Justice of it as probably attended to. 'Twas the business of the Magistrate no doubt in some Cases to right even such a One, as well as a Freeman of *Rome*, and tho' the Privileges of the one might by the Laws of the Country be so much more extensive: Yet we have no reason to conclude such were totally deny'd the Liberty of Appeal. And if this be granted (as sure there is very little Reason to dispute it) even Slaves had the Power of appealing to the Magistrate, and consequently were not depriv'd of all Right of Self-Preservation.

BUT should this fail them (as was the Case of all, when the Supreme Magistrate was against them) yet the Gospel allows still further Means to be used. *When* (says our Blessed Lord) *you are persecuted in one City, fly to another.* This was as much in the Power of a Slave, as the greatest Citizen of *Rome*, and must surely be acknowledg'd an effectual way to secure themselves from the utmost Rage of their Enemies. Distance of Place put them out of the reach of Malice, and might possibly so change the Scene of their Afflictions, as to give them perfect Peace, and Tranquillity. This Method might not only free them from Stripes, but Bonds too; and afford them both Balm for their Wounds, and Freedom for their Persons. How often and how successfully this was practis'd, were endless, and indeed trifling to insist on, and the Providence of God was often so very remarkable in the particular Management hereof, that it cannot have escap'd the Notice of any.

BUT should we suppose the utmost Extremity, and that they had none on Earth to appeal to, nor any possible Way of flying; yet nothing could deprive them of their last Refuge, earnest Prayer to God. This was an Appeal, that all the Malice of Men and Devils was not able to stop, or hinder its Progress. Sure I am, 'twas an Appeal as effectually deliver'd St. Peter, as that to the Laws did St. Paul, and gave him the Honour of an Angel to unloose his Fetters, and burst the Gates of his Prison open. I am sensible, the mentioning any thing of this Nature, serves only to divert the Gentleman we have to deal with; but when we consider, that not a Sparrow falls to the Ground, without the Knowledge of God; and that the very Hairs of our Head are number'd; let some put their Trust in Chariots and Horses, place all their Securities in Camps, and Armies: But be our Trust only in the Lord our God; and how foolish soever it may at present appear, the Experience of all Ages has abundantly demonstrated, That it is better to trust in the Lord, than put any Confidence in Man; and that he only is our never failing Refuge.

NOR is this only to be inferr'd from Example, and the Nature and Attributes of God, but we have the utmost Encouragement thereto, from his Word and Promise. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray,* saith St. James. It is more than once the Assurance is given us, that God is no idle Spectator of the Ills that befall us, and is not only able, but willing to deliver us. *In every thing,* saith St. Paul, *with Prayer and Supplication, let your Request be made known unto God:* And our Blessed Lord himself, in the most peremptory Terms, assures us, our Grievs are not unregarded.

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garded. If God then be for us, who can be against us! If the Almighty be our Preserver, we can be in no Danger of what Men, or Devils can do. 'Tis indeed what is grateful to him, and what he expects from us, that when all other Succour fails, we should fly to him, and a distrust of either his Ability, or Will to help us, raises his Displeasure against us. Were there no Combats of this kind, the most eminent Graces of our Holy Religion would want Exercise; and where were the Virtues of Faith and Patience, were none in this World to suffer Wrong? Whatever it may be thought by some, 'tis not only for the Good of particular and private Persons, but whole Societies sometimes, that they should stand the fiery Trial of Affliction. Is it not the Assertion of God Almighty himself, that *when his Judgments are on the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness*. Nor are Affliction and Oppression always to be taken as Rods to correct, but sometimes as a Staff to support and increase Society itself. The Blood of the Martyrs being the Seed of the Church, was what they bravely believ'd, and we Experience. It argues indeed the basest Ingratitude, and Degeneracy in humane Nature; but 'tis too true in Fact, that 'tis almost impossible for us to be prosperous in this World, and in earnest for Religion together. And most certainly not only single and private Persons, but whole Societies have had often Reason to join with the *Psalmist*, and say, *It is good for us that we have been afflicted*.

THESE are the Measures, these the Limits of Submission we have laid down in the Gospel; and whatever they are thought of now, were in the best and most pure Ages of Christianity, esteem'd Remedies abundantly sufficient for Self-preservation, and such (espe-

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cially the last) as would reach every possible Case, without Omnipotence itself can be suppos'd to be abridg'd. But of late we have been taught different Lessons, and these are treated as fit to be inculcated only to *Slaves* and *Monastics*; People that feed entirely on Contemplation, and are Strangers to the Liberties of a Subject! a *Briton*! a *Protestant*! The dear Law of Nature, and Self-preservation, is not to be trusted, either in the Hands of the Magistrate, or the Heels of the Refugee, nor to the Goodness, and infinite Wisdom of God Almighty himself; but new Expedients must be brought us from *Rome*, and *Geneva*, and even Contradictions themselves shall Unite, like *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, afresh to Crucify our Saviour in his Doctrines. But however, such Arts as are us'd, with the Methods to back them, commences our next Business to consider.

THE Opposition which is made to us in the General, is very inconsiderable; nothing is suggested, but that the general Expressions of Scripture, are always suppos'd to imply some Limitations in them; and that the Passive, as well as active Parts of our Duty are Subject to them. We are told, we are commanded Actively to obey our Parents in all Things; but this can't possibly be so understood, that we are obliged to comply with their sinful Commands; and that therefore the generalness of the Scripture Expressions are no Rule in all possible Cases, but are to be under such Restrictions, as are in other Places laid down. And that with regard to Suffering no Man was oblig'd to it, when he could avoid it with Honour; neither was it requir'd of us, &c. And thus far we seem all agreed: but then the Question is, what these honourable Means are that may be used? That those we have mention'd are such, all concur, that

is, when a Man is injur'd, he may appeal to the Magistrate, fly from the Oppressor, and pray to God to deliver him; but those we have to deal with, insist on further Means, and tho' they are very little concern'd for Slaves, and Christians in general, yet for Subjects, or in more modern Language, for *Englishmen*, and *Britons*, they have a great deal to offer, which for their entire Satisfaction, shall be our Business particularly to examine,

St. Paul then; 'tis well known, lays down the Duty of Subjects thus, *Let every Soul be Subject to the higher Powers*, *ὅτι ἡ ἐξουσία ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ* for there is no Power, but of God; or which is no unnatural Comment, with *St. Peter* we may say, For so is the Will of God, that we should be Subject to every Power, or humane Creature, whether the King as Supreme, &c. For I think it can with no Reason be disputed, that *St. Paul's* Negative amounts to the same, as *St. Peter's* Affirmative; and so when he says there is no Power but of God, and makes that the Reason of our Submission to it, it may very well be explain'd by *St. Peter*, that every Power is to be submitted to, because so is the Will of God.

IN this View the Reason given both by *St. Peter*, and *St. Paul*, must be the same, That Subjects were to submit to every Power, because every Power was of God; or that it was his Will, that they should submit to it. So that then the Apostle's Argument runs thus, *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers*: For there is no Power, but it is the Will or Ordinance of God that you should submit to it; whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Will or Ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.

THE Will of God being the Supreme of all Laws, must consequently be the Supreme Rule of our Duty; and whenever that is made the Reason of any Injunction, all further Dispute must consequently cease. For tho' in the Case of the Will of Man there is, and may be a possibility of an Appeal, yet in every Instance, the Will of God is the last and eternal Reason of Things; if therefore it appear, *St. Paul* here urges the Duty of Subjection to Magistrates, because it is the Ordinance or Will of God, that we should be so Subject to them, the Obligation to its Practice is back'd with the greatest of all Sanctions, and is founded in the very Nature, and Essence of God.

THIS premis'd, it may not be improper particularly to prove, That *St. Paul*, as well as *St. Peter*, makes this, among many other, the prime Reason of our Subjection to the Magistrate, because it is the Will or Ordinance of God. Not but something of this kind may be inferr'd from his particular Relation to us, as such. But the Arguments of this Nature, being more perplex'd, and what will not be so easily understood; what we shall insist, shall not be deduc'd from the Consideration of its being a Duty we owe to the Magistrate, but abstracted from all such Relations, it is in general the Will of God we should be Subject to him.

TO return then to the Apostles Way of Reasoning in this Point. Let every Soul, says he, be Subject to the higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God; whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God: Wherefore (he concludes) we must needs be Subject, not only for
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Wrath, but also for Conscience sake. I have the rather omitted what other Topics the Apostle uses, because they are rather founded in the Reason and Nature of the Thing, than the positive Law of God: But as this Duty is declar'd positively to be the Will or Ordinance of God, and from thence our Duty is concluded to be founded in Conscience, as well as Interest, or Fear, it is no longer to be consider'd as barely a rational Inference, or Conclusion, but a particular, and positive Law laid down by the Gospel; and such too, as not only (as some love to contend) affects Slaves, and Men that have forfeited their Lives, but every Soul; and whosoever resists, or opposes this, resists and opposes the positive Will, and Ordinance of God. My Meaning is, That St. Paul, as well as (we have before observ'd of) St. Peter in his Reasoning on this Subject, lays down such a Reason, as must reach not only all Persons, but all possible Cases, without we can suppose any Case to be of that Nature, to discharge us from what is enjoyn'd, or ordain'd by God himself. For this is the Reason, and I may say, prime Reason he gives for our Subjection (what he adds after being only Occasional, and as 'twere by way of Parenthesis) That 'tis so ordain'd, or in St. Peter's Language, the Will of God, That every Soul should be subject, &c. And as he sets out with this, so he concludes with the same, *Wherefore you must needs be subject for Conscience sake*, which it must be observ'd only the Divine Law can reach.

I AM very well aware here it will readily be suggested, I my self allow of some Limitations; such as Appealing, Flying, &c. and therefore the Reason of the Apostle is not to be extended so far, as to take away all means of Self-preservation; con-

consequently for any thing contain'd in the Apostle's Reason, of its being the Will of God that we should be Subject, other means of the same Self-preservation may be us'd, and are as allowable.

AND this I should very easily admit, were the same Authority produc'd for the use of them, as may for the Instances mention'd; that is, were it any where plainly said in Scripture, that a Man, or Society of Men, might use the Sword against either the Supreme, or subordinate Magistrate, as the means of their Self-preservation: For it ought to be observ'd, that it is not our Self-preservation that is our Warrant in this Case, either to Appeal, or Fly, but it is its being the declar'd Will of God, that so we may, and ought to do in order to avoid the Rage of our Persecutors. It may indeed be argu'd, that Self-preservation is the first Law of Nature, but sure it won't be contended 'tis such a Law, as ought to supersede a positive Law of God; till therefore it appear to be the Will of God that such Means may be us'd, the bare Consideration of preserving ones Self, cannot be alone a sufficient Warrant to us.

THIS is so fully, and plainly laid down in the general, that our Blessed Lord himself insists, *That he that will save his Life, i.e. by an unwarrantable Means, Shall lose it*; and further adds, *He that should lose his Life for his Sake, should find it*. So that bare Self-preservation, is no Reason at all in the Gospel, and as we are now only on the Scripture State of the Question, what Means may be us'd in all possible Cases (as some love to state it) ought to be deduc'd from the positive Determinations thereof; or such necessary Consequences, as are equally plain, and Conclusive.

ON this Issue then in the Case of Subjects, the Casuists we have to deal with, have thought fit of late to venture their Cause, and therefore they tell us St. Paul only inculcates Subjection to such Magistrates, as are a *Terror to evil Works*. ' And that ' Governour who contradicts this Character ; who is ' not a Terror to evil Works, but to good ; who is ' not the Minister of Good to the Vertuous, and of ' Vengeance to the Wicked only ; and who is not ' continually watching for the Good, and Happiness ' of humane Society, is not the Governor St. Paul ' means, or to whom he presses Obedience'. *

THIS, I confess, is very peremptorily laid down, but I can't, for my Part, imagine how they know this. Had indeed the Apostle said, Let every Soul be subject to such Rulers, and only such as are a Terror to evil Works, there had been Reason for the Limitation here contended : But when he expressly says, 'tis the Ordinance or Will of God that they should be subject to every Power (for certainly the Negative *no Power* implies the Affirmative) under such Terms, good and bad must be included, and the Subjection the Apostle presses must appear unlimited.

THIS is readily admitted, and we are told in †Terms the Apostle does set out with, and ' presses Obedience and Non-Resistance to the higher Powers in ' unlimited Words. Yet he manifestly afterwards ' limits this Obedience to such Rulers, as truly answer the End of their Institution". But as how ?
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* Measures of Submission, p. 5. † Ibid. p. 6.

We grant, he does make it another Argument of our Obedience, that Rulers are not a Terror to good Works; but the utmost that can be inferr'd from hence is, such in the General is the Nature of their Office; but when they fail in this, does he then say they may be oppos'd? 'Tis true in this Case, the Argument drawn from their being so here, ceases, when they do not so exercise their Office; but what he urges before, that it is the Will of God, that every Soul should be subject, must still hold good, without he had mention'd this as an Exception to his general Injunction. 'Tis readily admitted, a General Rule, however express'd, may have an Exception; but then in order to our knowing it, it must be either particularly set down, or at least necessarily imply'd; but how does this appear in the Case before us? Certainly it must be allow'd, the best Reasoners often make use of very different Topics, without their in the least clashing with each other: The Apostle might therefore urge the Duty of Subjection primarily, because it was the Will, or Ordinance of God; and afterwards very consistently argue the same Duty from the general Usefulness of the Magistratical Office; and it is not to be imagin'd why the bare doing so, should be deem'd either limiting or explaining his Sense to us in such a manner, as is contended.

BUT in Answer to this, we are told, 'The Argument indeed which the Apostle first uses for Obedience in Subjects, seems distinct from what follows (that is of Rulers being a Terror, &c.) viz. 'That their Governors are of God, that it is his Will they enjoy this Power for the publick Good'. And again, the Argument us'd by the Apostle from the general Usefulness of Magistrates, is said to be
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nothing but a Recapitulation of his own Words, without any Interpretation of them. The higher Powers, v. 1. are the Rulers, v. 3. is the Minister of God for good to them that do good: And the Minister of God to execute Wrath on him that doth evil, v. 4. who is declar'd to be continually attending upon this very Thing, v. 6. Can any one deny, That Governors are thus describ'd? Or that those Governors which are describ'd, are the Governors whom St. Paul means? Or that this Description of his, is the Argument from whence he presses Subjection in Point of Conscience? And doth it not follow manifestly from hence, that the Governor who contradicts all this Description, is not the Governor here describ'd, and consequently not the Governor to whom he here presseth Obedience". Again, 'If any one can prove that it is possible he should intend by Governors, who are continually attending the Good of their Subjects, not only such, but also such as are continually attending, and watching to make their Subjects miserable: And if any can shew me the Conclusiveness of this Argument, Rulers are oblig'd by their Office to be a Terror to evil Works, and not to the good: Therefore you are oblig'd in Conscience to submit to them, when they are a Terror to good Works; then will I retract, &c.

HERE have I laid before you the full Strength of our Modern Casuists on the Thirteenth of the *Romans*; and have the rather been so very particular, because I have often observ'd, when the Sense of what they contend for is only oppos'd, 'tis a mighty pra-

practis'd Art with them to complain of Misrepresentation. The Reasons here offer'd next, Commences our Business to consider.

FIRST then it is observ'd, that the Two Arguments us'd by the Apostle for Subjection, are really but one, and that too entirely drawn from the Usefulness of Magistrates in General; 'tis own'd indeed, they *seem to be distinct*. And must certainly really be so, if there is any difference between Heaven and Earth. For let any impartial Man consider, whether there can be any Thing possibly more distinct, than the Reasons us'd by the Apostle in the first and third Verses. In the one, he argues entirely from the Will, and Ordinance of God. *There is no Power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordain'd of God*: In the other, he argues from the usual Proceedings of Magistrates, that they were, generally speaking, only the Punishers of Evil-Doers; and therefore in the general, they had little Reason to apprehend any Danger from them. *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same*. Can this be call'd only a *seeming Distinction*? Certainly as long as any such Thing as Distinction can be made, and till two can be prov'd to be one, and one to be two, the different Topics here made use of by the Apostle, must appear to the Eye of even common Sense.

NOR is the general Nature, and Tendency of the Apostle's Arguments more apparently distinct than the Terms that are us'd in them. For in the first, he insists in the most unlimited Expressions, that *there is no Power, but of God*: Which Words, if they

they are not consider'd distinct from what he mentions as the general Character of Rulers afterwards, are not possibly convertible to them. For it can't in the least be imagin'd, the Apostles Design was to represent every Governor or Ruler, as justly bearing this Character; no to be sure, he was as sensible as the Gentleman we are engag'd with, that some of them were a Terror not to evil but good Works; and this is allow'd † by themselves. But he only observes to them in the general they were so, and therefore on that account too, they ought to be subject to them. So that tho' it may in some, and that too very good Sense, be said by the Apostle, that there is no Power or Ruler, but what, it is the Will of God you should be subject to: Yet sure it will not be insist'd, that there is no Ruler, but what makes good the Character here mention'd by the Apostle; consequently the very difference and inconvertibleness of the Terms, must speak the Arguments entirely distinct, and as such Independant of each other.

BUT because we are often particularly call'd on to attend every Thing said by this Gentleman, we proceed to follow him. The higher Powers, Verse the first, then are said by him to be the same, with the Rulers Verse the third; consequently his, or their not making good the Character there given, cannot include any other but such Powers, or Rulers. But this cannot be admitted, because the account given of the higher Powers in the first Verse, is by far more extensive, than that of Rulers in the third; and tho' it may justly be asserted by the Apostle there is no Power but of God; yet it cannot with equal

† Measures of Submission, p. 4.

equal Reason be said, every Ruler makes good the Character there given of them in the General. 'Tis I know a good Rule in Reasoning, to conclude Particulars in the General, but it were entirely new to infer the General from Particulars; and therefore nothing contended for, can in the least be drawn from what the Apostle says of that kind; consequently what is deduc'd is fallacious, and inconclusive, and the Arguments laid down must appear still distinct in their Nature, and wholly depend on the Reasons each of them have to back them.

To the after Queries therefore so briskly proposed, we Answer, The Apostle's first Argument does include every Power, or Ruler, whether good, or bad, and there is not in his Second, ought that gives it any determinate Sense to the contrary; without the Major may be suppos'd to be included in the Minor, a sort of Logic that every School-Boy can dispute.

To say the Apostle's Argument can include none but the Particulars, is false in Terms, because he says there is no Power, or Ruler, but of God, in which most certainly every sort are included; good or bad; and tho' it is allow'd in his particular Description, he mentions none but the good; yet as in his general Injunction, before he expresses himself in such Terms, as necessarily include all, the Limitations contended must certainly be allow'd to be pass'd over, at least in Silence; and as to any thing in the Thirteenth to the *Romans*, must be concluded an unwritten, if not a false Tradition. The Apostle does indeed conclude, from both his Arguments, that Obedience is our Duty, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake; but I can't possibly see when

when the latter fails, the former must necessarily do the same. 'Tis, I own, hard to conclude, were the due Execution of their Office, the only Reason of our Obedience, it is due to them when that ceases; but when the Ordinance, or Will of God, is made the Reason of it, sure it is very easy to do it, how bad soever they may be. 'Tis not for their, but God's sake we obey them; and tho' it is inculcated mightily by those we are engag'd with, That public Good is the only Reason of Obedience: Yet it must be insisted on, that the Duty is enforc'd, both by *St. Paul*, and *St. Peter*, because so it is ordain'd by, and so is the Will of God.

V A I N therefore are the Arts which are used to obscure the inimitable Beauties of Language and Reason, with which this Distinction is enforc'd by my *Ld. Bishop of †Rocheſter* in this Controversy. An Apostle will argue becoming an Apostle still, and tho' he may stoop to the Motives of Conveniency, and make the Public Good enforce his Doctrines: Yet it must be observ'd, he primarily sets out with higher Sanctions, and makes the Will of our Maker the first and chief Reason of our Duty. The Wisdom and Goodness of God has indeed so order'd our Duty in this particular, that it very well Comports with the general Happiness of Mankind: But the Holy Penmen too well knew the Lusts and Passions of humane Nature, to let it wholly rest there; and therefore we are fully inform'd by them, that it is, not only our Interest, with regard to this World, but our indispensable Duty, with respect to the other, to submit to the Magistrate. How ill then do they represent the

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† See his Latin Sermon.

the Apostles, who artfully endeavour to put asunder, what is by them and God so strictly join'd together. Men that are wedded, to their Pleasures and Gratifications of this World, may, and indeed generally do, take all the Motives of their Duty wholly from it; but it was the Business of an Apostle to instruct us better, and tho' he might lightly mention something of that Nature: Yet he chiefly and primarily lays before us, what is the Will and Pleasure of God. We do indeed sometimes find our selves expostulated with from such Topics, as we ourselves are fond of, and an Apostle himself queries with us, *Doth not even Nature teach us?* But these are rather to be taken as the Condescensive Arts of the Holy Penmen, than the stated, and more regular Methods of their Reasonings. They that were willing to be all Things unto all Men, that if it were possible they might gain some, did as much as in them lay calculate their Arguments, even to the Passions, and Infirmities of humane Nature, and omitted no innocent Art to allure us to our Duty: But still it must be observ'd, Topics of this Nature were only occasionally made use of by them, and rather brought in as the Evidence of the sweetness and obliging Temper of the Genius that mov'd them, than what they immediately inculcated, and urg'd as the main and indispensable Duty of their Office. And this the least Attendance to what is deliver'd by St. Paul, in the Passage disputed, might have easily discover'd, and had not some Men rather wanted than found any Proof, the Thirteenth to the *Romans* had been thought as little to favour the Doctrine of Resistance in this Age, as it ever was in any other.

BUT

BUT whatever may be thought of these, and such like Observations, in particular, thus much in the general I think must be allow'd, that the Apostle does lay down the Duty of Submission in unlimited Terms, and such a Reason too is given by him for it, as must reach every possible Case. And tho' the subsequent Reason he draws from the general Usefulness of the Magistratical Office, should not be allow'd to be equally extensive: Yet thus much is very certain, that there is nothing couch'd in it, inconsistent with the most unlimited Extent of the other. For certainly none will deny, that tho' when the Goodness or Usefulness of the Magistrate, only is made the Reason of our Submission to him, there may be some possible Cases of Resistance imply'd therein: Yet when the Will, or Ordinance of God is made the Reason, Submission is always, and in every Instance, our Duty, 'till that Will, or Ordinance, particularly informs us of the contrary. But that it is the Will or Ordinance of God, that we should submit, is fully laid down by the Apostle; but that this Submission is any where limited, the Apostle at least is entirely Silent; consequently, for any thing can be possibly inferr'd from the Apostle's manner of treating on this Subject, all Resistance must be forbidden in the most unlimited Extent, and our Modern Project of the Measures of Submission, must be drawn from other Topics, than what the Thirteenth to the *Romans* can possibly afford.

BUT let us give our Modern Casuist all possible Indulgence, and (as he fondly Endeavours) divest the Apostle of his prime and main Argument, *viz.* as the Duty of Submission is requir'd as the Will or

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Ordinance of God; and suppose him only arguing here from Rulers being generally a Terror to evil Works, and not to the good: Yet even in this View the inferring Resistance from the Apostle's way of arguing, must appear very new, and perhaps a Work wholly unthought of in all Ages before, and left to the sole Management of this Gentleman's, in this, to be sure inimitable Pen. The Apostle's Argument thus consider'd, runs thus, Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil; wherefore you must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake. Now what can here possibly be inferr'd for Resistance? And what has the Apostle here said, to give Subjects greater Privilege of this kind, than the meanest Slave? I grant, he does here argue from Rulers being generally a Terror to evil Works; but suppose they are not so, nay, are a Terror to good Works, does he determine any thing concerning our Practice in such a Case? As he is entirely Silent in the Premises, one might reasonably hope, we should be the same in our Conclusions: For certainly tacit Premises, can extend no further than to tacit Conclusions, and when this is once admitted, what becomes of all our modern boasted Arguments, from the Thirteenth to the *Romans*. Or to go to such Instances, as are mention'd to us in this Dispute; * The Case of the Centurion, who saith to one Soldier go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh; can it possibly be inferr'd from this Passage barely consider'd, any Disobedience can be allow'd? Surely some other Topics must be found out, and other Texts too, if the Argument

* Answer to Dr. Atterbury, p. 160.

gument turns on the Gospel for any thing of this Nature.

I KNOW those we have to deal with, have an excellent Talent at Implications, and can see an Exception in the most absolute Forms of Expression, that can possibly be us'd. Not only the Gospel, but the Language of our Statutes, have felt the Force of their mighty Genius this Way, and the Proposition, that in express Words, denys Resistance upon any pretence whatever, is not with them, without its Limitations; but as this is manag'd with a sort of Logic peculiar to themselves, so it is pity to envy them the Pleasure of using it. As long as common Honesty, and common Sense, obtain in the World, neither Books nor Men can be said to speak when they are Silent, and whatever some may think of it, to practise any thing of this Nature, is not to interpret, but to add to the Word of God.

BUT see the Vicissitude of Things! hitherto we are mistaken, it seems, in so much as supposing any thing like Resistance argu'd from the Thirteenth to the *Romans*. Nothing of that Nature is at all pretended, either as there express'd, or imply'd; and therefore we are told with some sort of Wonder (in Answer to one who took the Gentleman we are here concern'd with, so to argue) That * 'one
' would think by your manner of Representation,
' that I had labour'd to prove the lawfulness of
' Resistance, from St. *Paul's* having forbid it;
' Whereas all that I was concern'd for, was to shew
' what that Resistance truly is, which he hath here

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* Answer to Dr. Atterbury, p. 161.

‘ forbidden; and to that Purpose do prove, that
 ‘ his general Prohibition was not to be understood,
 ‘ in an unlimited Sense”.

IT being thus fully allow’d, that Resistance is only forbidden by the Apostle, this certainly must be a Conclusion that every Body will agree in, that nothing the Apostle has said can possibly be construed in favour of Resistance in any possible Case. And if the Duty of Submission is under Limitations, it must be gather’d from different Propositions elsewhere laid down by the Holy Penmen. For what is forbidden, can by no Rules of Interpretation, be suppos’d to be allow’d; and where the Holy Book is admitted to be silent, it ought not to be forc’d to speak.

OUR modern Project of Paraphrasing the Thirteenth to the *Romans*, so as to make it speak Resistance, failing, and the utmost can be inferr’d from it, being only Silence; our celebrated Casuist leads us next to consider St. *Paul*’s Example, with regard to the Civil Power, which in his Opinion will abundantly clear his Sense, in what has been here debated, and vindicate the Doctrine of Resistance, at least in some possible Case, and consequently justify the Measures of Submission, so earnestly contended for by him.

WE are told then, ‘ That St. *Paul* being commanded by the Chief Captain, who
Acts xxii. 25. ‘ appear’d to have acted the Part of a
 ‘ Civil Magistrate, as well as a Commanding Officer in *Jerusalem*, resolving to find out what it was
 ‘ had so much incens’d the Multitude against him,
 ‘ in order to his own Confession of his Crime, com-
 ‘ manded

'manded him to be scourg'd: *St. Paul* could have
'born this Usage with as great Christian Patience,
'and *Roman* Fortitude, as any Man living: And no
'Man knew the true Glory of suffering wrongfully,
'better than he. But instead of this, he seems to
'think it a much more becoming Part to insist upon
'those Civil Privileges, which the Laws of the
'State had entitl'd him to, as he was free of the
'City of *Rome*. *

HAD this Gentleman told us, *St. Paul* thought
fit to appeal to the Laws, he had fairly represented
the Case as it was, but his mentioning him, as in-
sisting on any of his Privileges, in any other Sense,
may indeed represent the Case, as favouring the
Cause he contends, but sure it is very wide from
the true History of the Passage. *Is it lawful, says*
St. Paul, for you to scourge a Man that is a Roman,
and uncondemn'd? But what is this, pray, to the
Point of Resistance? Is there no difference be-
tween Words and Blows? And is not the Case vast-
ly distinct between modestly Appealing, and Re-
monstrating; and open Violence, and Resistance?
He that argues at this rate, needs sure to be re-
minded, That he that distinguishes well, argues
well.

THE imaginary Triumphs he makes over those
whom he represents, as condemning this Expostula-
tion of the Apostle, I leave those to Answer for (if
there are any such) who deny to Christians the Li-
berty of appealing: But what Light this can give
us as to the Doctrine of Resistance, for which 'twas

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* Measures of Submission, p. 210.

produc'd, is hard to imagine. Let the Case be consider'd. *St. Paul* here unjustly condemn'd by a subordinate or deputed Magistrate, appeals to those Laws were set him by his Superiors. To call this resisting, or as it is call'd, insisting on his Privileges, or claiming a Right, with abundance more of our modern Cant of Liberty, &c. seems to me to destroy the Notion of different Degrees in the Magistrate, and make no difference between Battle and Murder, and appealing from an inferior to a superior Power. Men that argue thus wildly, may be taught by our Statutes, that tho' the one is warrantable, and may bring us redress; yet the other meets deservedly the Answer of a Gibbet, or an Axe.

BUT we proceed. It is further observ'd, 'That when *Ananias* in the next Chapter, Commanded them that stood by *St. Paul*, to smite him on the Mouth; his Reply was very severe, *God shall smite thee thou whited Wall: For sittest thou there to judge me after the Law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the Law?* And tho' he afterwards repent-ed him of the reproachful Word he gave the High Priest in his Anger; yet he repented not of the just Sense he had of the illegal Indignity offer'd; or his Zeal against all such Magistrates as acted against the End of their Office, and against those Laws, by which they ought to be govern'd in the Execution of it: Here again it is evident that this great Apostle had a Spirit of Liberty in him". *

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* Ibid. p. 211.

DID not the Character of this Gentleman in this Controversy, exact our Observation of all he thinks fit to say, I should esteem it affronting the Reader's Judgment, to lay before him any Thing so trifling, and foreign to the Purpose. When St. Paul in this very Story so highly blames, and condemns himself, for so much as using a disrespectful Word towards the Powers he was before; when out of the Mouth of those very Scriptures, he always inculcated as his Rule, he brings in a full Sentence against so much as speaking evil of the Ruler of the People, 'tis astonishing to find his Practice mention'd, in a Controversy of this Nature. *God shall smite thee*, was the utmost stretch, even his Passion could extort from him. He does not, no, he durst not say, *I will smite thee*, but *God shall smite thee*. If Injustice call'd for Vengeance, even his Anger names the proper Judge, and tho' the hurry might make him forget the Magistrate, yet even then the God to whom Vengeance alone belongs, did not slip his Memory. He reminds the High Priest indeed of what Reason he had to expect such Vengeance, by his basely abusing his Office: But does he threaten, nay, does he so much as Surmise any Thing of that Nature of himself? No, his Words were, *God shall smite thee, thou whited Wall*.

WE are told further, 'If we look back as far as the 16th Chapter, we shall find yet greater Proof. The Magistrates of *Philippi* commanded *Paul* and *Silas* to be beaten with many Stripes, and cast into Prison; but the next Morning sent to the Keeper to let them go. St. Paul's Answer is very observable, *They have beaten us openly uncondemn'd, being Romans, and*

v. 23.
v. 25.
have

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‘ have cast us into Prison: And now do they thrust us
 ‘ out privily? Nay verily, but let them come them-
 ‘ selves, and fetch us out. This is afterwards call’d,
 ‘ expressing some Resentment against the Invasion
 ‘ of the Privileges of the Subject, which the Magi-
 ‘ strates were guilty of; and pleading the Cause of
 ‘ injur’d Inferiors.” *

BUT what Resentment pray? Not that of a
 Soldier sure, or in the more belov’d Language a *Brit-
 ton*. He does not tell them they should find their
 Violence repell’d with Violence. And tho’ we are
 free to own the † ‘ Happiness of humane Society,
 ‘ and the good Estate of the inferior part of Man-
 ‘ kind, might move his Soul to a generous Indigna-
 ‘ tion against every thing in Government, which
 ‘ favour’d of Tyranny, and this might kindle a
 ‘ Zeal in his Breast, for every thing which it was fit
 ‘ for Subjects to enjoy”: Yet none of these Consi-
 derations, as far as yet appears, mov’d him to resist
 the Magistrate; and therefore it is not to be ima-
 gin’d, what || *Light this account of St. Paul’s Behaviour*
will give us in the true Interpretation of the Doctrine
deliver’d by himself, and others in the New Testament,
concerning Government.

THE Right of appealing, I think, the Reader
 need not be reminded, is allow’d on all Sides, and if
 this be all contended for from the Behaviour of *St.*
Paul, We are free to own this Example a full Ju-
 stification of it. When real Opposers are too power-
 ful, it may be necessary to dress up imaginary ones;
 but

* *Ib.* p. 212.

† *Ib.* 214. || *Ib.*

but, I believe, I might challenge this Gentleman to produce one of the greatest Sticklers for Passive-Obedience (if either he understood himself, or any Body else) that deny'd the Power of appealing from, tho' he does in the most absolute Sense that of resisting the Magistrate. Some may have a considerable Interest in confounding these two Things, but certainly there is a manifest Difference between fighting and remonstrating. They may sometimes indeed go Hand in Hand, but whilst they are kept assunder, and the latter only is practis'd, its certain the Battle will be without Bloodshed. And as it is very strange, Things in their Nature so very distinct, should be so wildly confounded by so great a Master of Reason, as we are contending with; so it is equally surprising to find it insisted by him, that this Right of appealing is in the Application, the same with regard to both the supreme, and subordinate Magistrate; and that in answer to that it should be said * *That it cannot relate to one, without relating to the other.* For tho' it is readily admitted, *Government cannot be manag'd in the World, but by deputed and inferior Officers, and the Christian Religion (as St. Peter testifieth) commands the Obedience requir'd in it, with respect to both; tho' Pilate, who was but a deputed Governor, is argu'd to be from above; tho' both the Supreme, and Superior are justly said by many to act as one Authority, by the same Divine Commission: And tho' it is allow'd impossible according to our Reasonings, to oppose that is by Violence) in any Instance, the lowest Officer in Authority, without opposing the Supreme: Tho' I say all this should be admitted, as really I see no reason to apprehend the Consequence if it were:*
Yet

* Ibid. p. 213.

Yet most certainly there still remains a possibility of appealing from the Subordinate to the Supreme, without any thing like Resistance, or Violence; and he that disputes this, must contradict almost every Days Experience in all our Courts of Judicature; and tho' such an inadvertency may be excus'd in a Polemical Writer, yet certainly such a Plea from the Bar at *Westminster-hall*, would meet with little but Scorn and Derision. But where must the Appeal be, when the Supreme Magistrate himself is the Aggressor? to none on Earth certainly, for if there be any such Power lodg'd there, that must be the Supreme, because, to use a modern Way of Demonstration, * *So far as any Power is Supreme, so far that Power is Supreme*. Whatever is the Denier, or last Resort we can appeal to, is most certainly what we justly call the Supreme Power: But inferior or subordinate Magistrates, are not in the Nature of the Thing, the last Resort we can appeal to; consequently their Authority is not in that Particular the same, because the one can be appeal'd from, and the other cannot.

I HAVE taken the more Pains to clear this, because throughout the whole Progress of this Controversy, abundance of Arts us'd to confound our Ideas in this particular; and we are so often told, we have no more redress against the Constable or inferior Magistrate, than the King himself; to which I answer, Yes, we have, because from the one we can appeal, from the other we can't, which as it makes the most important Difference between them: So if duly attended

* *Vide* Bishop of Bangor's Answer to Dr. Snape.

tended to, will effectually dispel a great part of the Mist, has been of late rais'd in this Debate.

BUT to resume. A Right of Appealing is allow'd on all Sides, but a Right of Resisting we deny; and from the Premises insist, That neither the Precepts of our Blessed Lord, nor those of * *St. Peter* nor *St. Paul*, nor Practice neither encourage it in any Case; consequently so far 'tis insisted, the Doctrine of Non-Resistance appears to be the Doctrine of the Gospel.

AND this too, so far as it regards the Practice of *St. Paul*, as well as his Precepts, in the Thirteenth to the *Romans*, is on a Review own'd; and we are told very gravely, *That the Design of the Sermon on St. Paul's Behaviour was mistaken; For the matter of Resistance by Arms, was not the thing in the least design'd to be built upon St. Paul's Example.*

UNHAPPY Gentleman! to be mistaken is his reigning Misfortune, and 'tis to be fear'd, will encrease with his Years: But 'tis very strange tho', that he should think † *St. Paul's Behaviour should give us a Light into the true Interpretation of the Thirteenth to the Romans* (for that, I can't but think, he had some Eye to by those Words) if he had not some little Thoughts of Resistance, and Resistance by Arms, when he penn'd the Sermon. But this we leave in the Arcana of his *Absolutelies* and *Properlies*, and proceed to some other Topics made use of in this Controversy.

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* *Vide* Preface to Measures of Submission, page the last.

† Measures of Submission, p. 214.

As then we have fully consider'd the Light the Example of *St. Paul* can give us of his Sense in the Doctrine of Resistance, it may not be improper yet further to consider such other Examples in this particular, as the Holy Ghost seems to have recorded purely for our more immediate Instruction.

THE Instances of this Nature, we shall fetch from the Examples of *David* in the Old Testament, and *St. Peter* in the New; each of which are so opposite and full to what our Moderns love to call every possible Case, that one would think the whole of the Controversy were decided by the bare reading only of their distinct Histories.

IN the History of *David*, we have as good a Man, as brave a Soldier, and as true a Patriot, as ever History could boast, persecuted by his Prince with uncommon Envy; *hunted*, as himself complains, *like a Partridge on the Mountains*, and having no Security for his very Life, but what he found in flight. He was not indeed a *Briton*, but yet a sincere Lover of his Country, and peculiarly distinguish'd for it. All his Words, his Actions, his Prayers, spoke him such. The surprising Series of Providence, in which his valuable Life was wrapt, the Holy Ghost himself seems with Fondness to relate, and the distinguishing Integrity with which he acquitted himself in all of them, gain'd him the Character of, *A Man after God's own Heart*. This great and good Man, thus injur'd, and thus provoked, contrary to all Law, Reason, or Gratitude of his Prince, tho' arm'd and able to make Reprisals, knows no other Refuge than flight, nor dares use any other Weapons than Prayers, and Tears. Had he

he believ'd his Allegiance ceas'd to his Sovereign; when he ceas'd to Govern by the Laws of Equity, and Reason: Had he believ'd him no longer the Minister of God, than while he consulted the good of his People: He wanted neither Courage nor Opportunity, to have spoke his Sense. Twice was *Saul* deliver'd into his Hands, even in the midst of all his Rage, and cruel Intentions against his Life; But the Use he made, even of these Miracles of Providence, was not to wreak his Revenge, or as some love to call it, show his Spirit of Liberty, and the publick Good: But Modestly to remonstrate the hardness of his Case, and extort a Confession of his Integrity, even from the baffl'd Malice of his Prince himself. The Methods of Resistance, made his very Soul to shudder at the Thought; and when he had only taken so much as a piece of his Garment afterwards, to convince him it was in his Power to have hurt him, his *Heart smote him*, and seem'd stung with a remorseful Diffidence of even his own Intentions.

THE Story is well known in this Controversy; but because even his very Flight has in this Age been constru'd into Resistance, it can't be improper, yet more particularly to recur to his History, as deliver'd by the Sacred Writings themselves, by which we shall be better able to judge of our modern Methods of Reasoning against his Example.

SAUL being told that *David* was in the Wilderness of *En-gedi*, went there to seek him, and finding a Cave, went in (as the Scripture expresses it) *to cover his Feet*. Lull'd thus in Security, and Slumber, *David's* Associates remind him of this Advantage, telling him, *Behold the Day, of which the Lord hath said unto thee, I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand,*

1 Sam. xxiv. 4. *Hand, that thou mayest do to him, as shall seem good unto thee.* Under the surprize of this wonderful Turn of Providence, David ventures to cut off the Skirt of Saul's Garment; but so exceeding timorous was he of what he had done, that his Heart immediately misgave him, and applying to those who had instigated him to it, he says, *The Lord forbid I should do this thing to my Master, the Lord's Anointed.* With **V. 6.** these Words, he not only determines himself, but his Company; and Saul, amidst all his Danger and Stupidity, got off unhurt.

BUT so implacable was the Malice of this unhappy Prince, that tho' the Circumstance of his Deliverance at that time fetcht Tears from his Eyes, and the solemnest Acknowledgment from his Tongue: Yet he afresh persists in his Hate, and can't quit the Thoughts of pursuing a Life, to the Preservation of which he so remarkably ow'd his own. Accordingly we find him chasing this unhappy Youth afterwards in the Wilderness of Ziph. Now by a second surprizing Turn of Providence, he is lockt up in Slumber, and fenceless expos'd to his Mercy. *Abishai*, a Companion of his Afflictions, advises him to take this as a hint of Providence, and desires that he might have a Part in his Dispatch. Now therefore (says he) *let me smite him, I pray thee, with the* **1 Sam.** *Spear, even to the Earth at once, and I will not smite him a second time.* David, at once struck with surprize, and horror, at the Temptation he was under, determines his Friend, and his Conscience, in the following Words, *Destroy him not: For who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed and be guiltless? As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him, or his Day shall come to dye,*

or

Or he shall descend into Battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine Hand against the Lord's Anointed: But I pray thee, take thou now the Spear that is at his Bolster, and the Cruise of Water, and let us go.

V. ix,
10, 11.

THERE needs not, I think, either Art, or Comment to speak the Prince here, so far from attending the Good of his People, that he was entirely abandon'd by every honest, and reasonable Sense of humane Nature. The Endeavours he us'd to destroy the Life of the excellent Youth he hunted, were not only directly opposite to all Law, and Justice, but even to the first Principles of Gratitude: Never had any Prince a braver, nor more faithful Subject: Yet even this great, and injur'd Man, amidst all his Provocations, tho' tempted to it, I had almost said by Providence itself, durst not lift up his Hand against him. He that wanted not Courage to face and encounter a *Goliath*, finds his Heart fail him, at so much as making bold with a Skirt of his Sovereign's Garment. So far was he from Resistance, that he fears even his innocent Stratagems to convince him of his Error, might be justly deem'd a Breach of his Duty.

THE Example of this Holy Man, thus fairly presented, our next Business is to consider what is said to it by the Patrons of Resistance. 'The Example of *David* (then we are told) so celebrated in this Cause, ought indeed to have great Weight, if his Conduct towards *Saul* be supposed to be justified by God himself. But I must observe that it manifestly pleads in favour of Self-Defence'.

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* Measures of Submission, p. 128.

BUT I must be permitted to observe the contrary. For if the Arms that *David*, and his Companions bore, were design'd for that Purpose, 'tis impossible to think why the Advantages he had over *Saul*, were not so far made use of, at least to secure him for the future from offering him any Violence. Tho' his Conscience was tender of killing him, yet one would have thought the least he would do in his own Defence, was to have taken him Prisoner, and by that Means have brought him to Reason. We find him often employing his Arms against the *Philistines*, and to the Rescue of his Country-men; but how brave soever he might be for them, he never struck a stroke against his King. In Arms 'tis true he was, but they were of no use to him against his Lord, and his Master (for so he calls *Saul* under his greatest Cruelty) but only then serv'd to incumber his flight. Let his own Words speak how distant his Thoughts were to any thing like Resistance. For after he had let him escape in the Wilderness of *En-gedi*, we find him address himself to *Saul* in the following humble and respectful manner. *My Lord the King, wherefore bearest thou Mens Words, saying, behold David seeketh thy Hurt? Behold this Day thine Eyes have seen how that the Lord hath deliver'd thee to Day into mine Hand in the Cave: And some bad me kill thee, but mine Eye spared, and I said I will not put forth mine Hand against my Lord, for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover my Father see, yea, see the Skirt of thy Robe in my Hand: For in that I cut off the Skirt of thy Robe, and killed thee not; know thou, and see that there is neither Evil nor Transgression in my Hand, and I have not sinned against thee: yet thou huntest my Soul to take it. The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee: But mine Hand shall not be*
upon

upon thee. And again, *After whom is the King of Israel come out? After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead Dog, after a Flea?* The Lord therefore judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my Cause, and deliver me out of thine Hand. Nor were his Actions less submissive and humble than his Words, *He stoop'd with his Face to the Earth, and bowed himself.* 1 Sam. xxiv. 8, to 15.

THEY that can construe these Words into Resistance, and what they love to call Self-Defence, have indeed Occasion to Comment upon them; but lower Degrees of Genius will be Content to put such a Sense on them, as common Sense, and common Honesty suggest, and envy not any the Pleasure of soaring above the common Understanding of Mankind. But it is observ'd further, 'That Saul was David's Prince, and he Saul's Subject. Had it been otherwise, or had he had any Authority from God to have seiz'd on the Crown during Saul's Life, he was oblig'd in Conscience to have done it.

This must be allow'd close Argument, and in the least to quarrel with it were unkind. So far as David was oblig'd in Conscience to have acted, no doubt so far he was oblig'd: But then one would think it might be hence inferr'd, that he was so oblig'd to make no Resistance against Saul, therefore he made no Resistance. But further, we are told, 'Saul unjustly fought after his particular Life; which was an Injury of a private Nature.'*

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TRUE,

* Ibid.

TRUE, but when it was pursu'd on such Principles, as were contrary to all Law, and Justice, one would think it might concern the Public; if a Prince may be allow'd to destroy the Life of a Subject, purely for his own Will and Pleasure, every Subject is equally in Danger, and not only private Lives, but the public Good is destroy'd by this Means. Was not St. *Paul* too a private Man, as well as *David*, the injury done him by scourging equally private and personal, but is it not argued to affect the Public, and his Example recommended to us for insisting on it as such? Is not *the Happiness of humane Society*, said expressly to be concern'd in his particular and personal Wrongs, and why may not the same be argued in the Case of *David*, as well as St. *Paul*?

BUT it is observ'd further, 'That *David's* Behaviour in those Circumstances, shews that he was resolv'd to defend himself, as far as he possibly could.' *

THAT I believe, if we add with a good Conscience, but to do it by Arms, was not possible for a Man of his Principles; That we may lawfully endeavour to preserve ourselves, is not the Matter in Dispute, but what Means are lawful to be us'd? Not those of *stretching forth our Hands against the Lord's Anointed*, certainly in *David's* Sense, no, none could do that and be *guiltless*. Justly therefore is it afterwards observ'd, † *That he abhorr'd the Thought of killing Saul, when he had it in his Power*; but

* Ibid. † Ib.

but as to his Reason of doing so, being, because it was not necessary to his own Preservation, and his knowing he was appointed by God to reign; however it might be in his Thoughts, its certain it was not express'd with his Tongue; and therefore we may safely conclude, his Reason for not offering any Violence to him, was, because he thought it a dreadful Sin: *God forbid*, says he, *I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's anointed*. This was the Reason he gave for his Non-Resistance, and tho' they that don't like it, may please themselves with inventing of another: Yet it is certain 'tis not David's, but their own, and the least can be said in such a Case is, *they are wise above what is written*.

CONSCIOUS of this, we are told in the Conclusion, about the Example of *David*, 'That whatever may be inferr'd from it, it cannot follow from *David's* Behaviour under a private Injury, that a whole Nation, or the greater Part of it, ought in Conscience to suffer all their temporal Happiness to be ruin'd at the Will of their Prince.'

VERY peremptorily concluded truly; but thus much one would think might be inferr'd, notwithstanding this, That what would have been a damnable Sin in *David*, will be the same in the whole or the greatest Part of a Nation, without Numbers can alter the Nature of Good and Evil, and the same Action is sinful in a single Man, and meritorious in a Multitude.

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BUT

Ibid.

BUT should any be so weak as to entertain such a Thought, and instead of not following a Multitude when they do Evil, imagin that Number can make Evil Good, the very Nature and Force of *David's* particular Reasoning would confound their Folly; for he does not say, *How can I?* but *who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?* Which Words I cannot but think as much to affect the whole Train of Regicides in Forty eight, as any single and private Assassin. Iniquity, 'tis true, may be establish'd by a Law, get Power, and Numbers on its side, but prosperous Wickedness is Wickedness still, and Rebellion is as much Rebellion in Ten thousand, as one single Man.

THE^c the Distinction between private and public Good, so much made use of in this Controversy (with several other of the same Nature) most properly comes under the Consideration of the Reason and Nature of the Thing, and so may seem determin'd to the second Proposition of this Work: Yet as it was so particularly apply'd to the Example of *David*; the little has been here offer'd, will not, I hope, be thought altogether foreign, even in the Scripture Part of the Controversy. But however that be, the Example of *David* must certainly be allow'd entirely to conclude against all Resistance against a Prince, even under the most Shocking Temptations of his Rage and Cruelty, and the greatest Opportunity of making him a Reprisal.

BUT we have not yet quitted the Example of *David* so fully as may be thought. We are told † that tho' in the Representation we have given of him,

† Lawfulness of resisting Tyrants, p. 6. 9.

he does give Saul the Titles of my Lord the King, and the Lords Anointed, yet there are Times of speaking out; and therefore in the 1 Chron. xii. 16, 17, 18. from whence our Author draws his Preachment; we are told, *He declares himself in a State of War, and doth not consider Saul's head, as cover'd with a Crown, but as cover'd with Guilt, and asserts the innocence of his Person, as well as the Goodness of his Design, when he had a Sword in his hand ready to give his Sovereign Battle. He speaks with a security in the Cause itself, and could despise all those that would call him Rebel or Traytor.* 'Tis said indeed, that David was so far from being of a seared Conscience, that is past feeling, that his Heart smote him when he cut off Saul's skirt of his Garment; yet now he hath no scruple to go out in Battle, to resist unto Blood striving against Sin.

HERE you see is a different Scene presented of David's Conduct. The fear, and horror he had of opposing his Sovereign tho' a Tyrant, was the effect of a raw and injudicious Judgment. His Conscience it seems was not ripen'd by Maturity, nor the Time yet come for him to speak out. But however, let us examine the matter of Fact, and take a view of him under the Improvements our Author has represented. In the Chapter, on which our Author Grounds these mighty Discoveries, we have an Account of some Bodies of Men, who were David's Associates during his flight from the unjust Persecutions of Saul. They are here describ'd as formidable in their Numbers, and well accomplish'd in the Arts of War. But of these *the Children of Benjamin, David*
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having some Suspicion, that the nearness of Blood they bore to *Saul*, might tempt them to betray him into his Hands, he addressees himself particularly to them, in the following Words, *If you are come peaceably to me, to help me, mine Heart shall be knit unto you: But if you be come to betray me into the Hands of mine Enemies, seeing there is no Wrong in mine Hands, the Lord God of our Fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.* *Amasai* having given him a satisfactory Answer to this, and assur'd him their Purposes were entirely peaceable towards him, and their Intentions no other, but

Chro. xii. to help and assist him, we find them entertain'd as Captains of the Band. In 17, 18.

the next Verse we have an Account indeed of their strange Purpose to go out with the *Philistines* against *Saul* to Battle, but that they in the least engag'd, it expressly declares the contrary, *they helped them not*; and so ill had *David* dissembled his honest Intentions for the Interest of his Sovereign, that we find the *Philistines* in Council, conclude to send him away, saying, *he will fall to his Master Saul, to the jeopardy of our Heads.* So just were they in the Conclusion, that they soon afterwards found to their Cost, that the Arms of *David* and his Company were not to be employ'd against *Saul*, but themselves, and that it was not by Battle, and Bloodshed from their Hands, but by the immediate Management of Providence it self, they were to be deliver'd from the Folly and Oppression of their infatuated Prince.

THIS as their whole Conduct, was an undeniable Proof of, so the Chapter before us does not so much as hint the contrary. As it tells us in Fact, they did not join the *Philistines*: So their appearing

ing to do so, was with no other View than to destroy them.

HAVING thus fairly laid the Case before you, as the Scripture has deliver'd it, I think I need add no further, but that the ingenious Author we have encounter'd, is the powerful Mr. *Thomas Bradbury*, both Ass, and Serpent, Stupid, and Venemous. To add any further, were to make him more considerable, than all intelligent Men will be able to bear, and to divert ourselves with him, too light for so serious a Subject.

PASS we from the Example of *David*, to that we propos'd of *St. Peter*, and we find the Facts indeed distinct. *David* durst not stretch forth his Hand in the Business of Resistance, but *Peter* did; did it in the best Cause that ever Sword was drawn in! Did it, as he thought, in Defence of his Master, the Lord of Life, and Glory; but neither the Honesty and Affection of his Intentions, the Injustice and Violence offer'd his Lord, nor any of the other almost innumerable Provocations he had, could screen him from that severe Reprehension of the Blessed Jesus, *Put up thy Sword again into its Place, for all that take the Sword, shall perish by the Sword.* Math. xxvi. 50

IT must exceed the most fruitful Invention in this Controversy, to form a possible Case, in every Circumstance like that of *St. Peter's*. Here was not only a Breach of all Law, Sacred, and Civil, but even the Son of God himself, unjustly apprehended, as a Thief, and a Robber. One would have thought, by an Act of this daring and monstrous Impiety, Government itself must have been unhinged

ed, and all Magistracy, and Order hurl'd into Confusion: But so did not think the Blessed Jesus, He *whom it became to fulfill all Righteousness*, would not be wanting in this: and as it was his Purpose to exact the same of his Followers, he himself sets them this Example of Submission to the Magistrate. Were, according to our Modern Comments, submission to Magistrates to be measur'd by the Justice and Goodness of their Proceedings, certainly never was greater nor more provoking Injustice than here. In the Person of our Lord, there was what never humane Nature before could boast, a spotless Innocence; One, *who knew no Sin; neither was Guile found in his Mouth*: But even he, it seems, was not to be preserv'd by the Methods of Resistance, and an attempt of that Nature not only receives the severest Censure from him, but he was at the Expence of a Miracle, to heal the Ear of the Person, the Warmth and Indiscretion of the Apostle had precipitately cut off.

THEY that think to avoid the Force of this, by alledging St. Peter oppos'd in this * *the Design of our Saviour's coming into the World*, seem unwilling to attend to the Nature, and Extent of the Reason given by him, for thus reprehending the Apostle: For he does not say, by thus using the Sword, you oppose the Will of my Father (which surely might have been expected, had his Crime only lay in clashing with God's Decree with regard to his Death) but *ALL that take the Sword, shall perish by the Sword*. The Reason here given, is not peculiar to the Case of St. Peter, but reaches all that should ever afterwards,

* Measures of Submission, p. 128, 129.

wards think either to defend Religion, or themselves, by Violence, and Resistance against the Magistrate. Not only thou *Peter*, but all them that use the Sword in this manner, are condemn'd by me. *My Kingdom is not of this World*, and therefore is not to be propagated by Arms and Violence, and tho' in some distant Ages, as is foretold, Kings shall be Nursing Fathers, and Queens the Nursing Mothers of my Church: Yet till they do come into it, I allow none of my Disciples to bear the Sword, but in Subordination to them. They indeed *do bear the Sword* by Commission from me, and my Father; *their Power is from above for the Punishment of Evil Doers*; but you must be Subject to them, and not dare to draw the Sword against them. *For all that so take the Sword, shall perish by the Sword.*

ALL that is said by our Measures of Submission Gentlemen, is, I think, accounted for; but if it may be allow'd in a Protestant Age, it may be observ'd, the Jesuits, with the usual Subtilties of the *Sorbon*, have thought fit to encounter this Passage in favour of their darling deposing Doctrine; and I hope, our Thoughts need not be so entirely determined to *Geneva*, but on this Occasion they may be allow'd a little to Glance on *Rome*. *St. Peter's* Fault then we are told by some of them, did not consist so much in using his Sword, as not staying for our Lord's Command, or precipitately engaging with such odds, as carry'd no probability of Success.

BUT to this our previous Observation still holds good, and the Reason given by our Lord for his Reprehension (reaching all Cases abstracted from these Circumstances) is of perpetual, and universal Obligation, and cannot therefore be determined, as peculiar

culiar to the then Circumstances of *St. Peter*. The Use of the Sword is condemn'd in all, and the Penalty of perishing by it, denounc'd against them, which would not surely have been so express'd, had our Lord thought it justifiable in any Case, or at any Time.

PASS we from this particular Occurrence, to the general Tenor and Genius of the Gospel, and we shall find the Doctrine of the Cross, and bearing the greatest Injury and Wrong, not only without Resistance, but even with Patience, nay with Joy, strenuously exacted, and run thro' the Spirit of the whole. *My Brethren, says St. James, count it all Joy when you fall into divers Temptations, by which all understand Persecutions, and our Blessed Lord himself expressly says, Blessed are you when you are persecuted for Righteousness sake, rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven.* 'Twas what he then particularly bid them expect and depend on: That they should be hal'd from one Magistrate to another, and be treated with that Ignominy and Scorn, as if they were the Filth and Offscouring of the World. Both the Theory and Practice of this seems throughout the whole Gospel, its peculiar and distinguishing Triumph, and to oppose the glaring Evidence every where to be found of this Nature, were to deny the Light of the Sun in its Meridian.

THE Method us'd in opposing this Argument, is not properly by denying the Truth of it, but by Endeavours to fright us from insisting on it too much, on account of its Consequences. We are told 'it represents Christianity, as necessarily laying Men open, and unguarded to all the Outrages the vilest
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Part of the World think fit to offer them. By the same Argument, it may be prov'd unlawful to resist a Robber, and a Cut-Throat. Also a Foreign Prince invading our Country. Nay, for a Christian Prince to resist the unjust Violence of his Subjects, rebelling against him."

BUT this is what exceeds my Apprehension. For certainly the Laws of Christianity may be suppos'd, at least, to allow the opposing a Robber, or a Cut-Throat, or the acting under ones own, in Opposition to a Foreign Prince, or a Prince's bearing the Sword for the punishing wicked and rebellious Subjects; without in the least supposing they had the same Right to oppose him. The Case of a Robber, a Cut-Throat, a Foreign Prince, or a Prince and his Subjects, is not surely so exactly parallel, as some love to represent them; and whatever may be justly said for the one, will not surely always hold good in the Case of the other. The Robber and the Cut-Throat perhaps may be prov'd to be destroy'd, even by the positive Command of God himself, and that is always a sufficient Warrant. The Foreign Prince is oppos'd by the Command of him whom God has set over us, and that may excuse us there, and our Prince himself bears the Sword for the Punishment of Evil Doers, and Rebels I think may be call'd such, and that may quit him too: But if it be our Duty to bear Injury and Wrong with Patience, and Joy, certainly when we have none of their particular Warrants, then it is our indispensable Duty to submit, and be easy even by Virtue of the general Tenor of the Gospel, and whatever may

may be argu'd for such distinct and different Cases, does not at all affect the Merits of the Cause.

I MUST own my self no great Friend to this way of drawing Consequences, from what some love to call Illustrations. It may generally be observ'd, Controversy by this Means is rather obscur'd than clear'd. Distinct and foreign Cases to the Question in Debate, or false and ignorant Deductions from the Premises laid down, are for the most part the hopeful Product of this way of arguing: And if there are any real Consequences drawn, they are generally those of confounding, and perplexing the Minds of the Disputants, and leaving the Truth yet further from being found out, than when only consider'd abstracted from all Comparisons. This surely must appear from the Case before us. For however, it may be the Practice and good Manners of the Gentleman in this Controversy to compare Princes, and Robbers, and Cut-Throats together, and thence to infer whatever holds good in the Case of the one, extends to that of the other; Yet one would think there is something so odious and ridiculous in this Way of drawing Parallels, with the long Chain of Consequences that attend them, that Gentlemen of common modesty, should be ashamed even of the indecency of the Practice. But be that as it will, 'tis all, it seems, we may have offer'd against the general Tenor of the Gospel; and if Men cannot by this Means be so confounded, and perplex'd in their Ideas, as not to be able to distinguish between a Sovereign and a Thief, a Prince and a Cut-Throat, with every other foreign and fantastich Case, which is thought fit to be propos'd, we must be left entirely without an Answer to the Particulars, and be laugh'd at too perhaps, for not following this
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wild Maze of Impertinence. To suffer wrong willingly and chearfully, is allow'd by all what the Gospel exacts; but the question, we are told, is, *How far we are to Suffer?* To this the Answer is very plain, even to the loss of our Lives, for such was the Example set us by our Blessed Lord himself, whose Footsteps we are commanded to follow. The return to this is, *We are subject by this Rule to every Violence and Outrage of the vilest part of the World.* But what then, pray? This only proves it a hard, but not a false Rule; and does not so properly reflect on them that insist on it, as the Rule itself. To tell us it represents the Gospel, as under this or that frightful Figure, is shameless trifling, when the Gospel really says, and is admitted to say, the things contended. It may indeed be mistaken, in the extent or Sense of what is laid down, but it can't be misrepresented when its own Words are expressly laid before the Reader; and therefore, when such is the Case, it ought to be insisted that the Gospel is not thus barely represented by us; but so it actually says itself. The laying before us imaginary Spectres, and Goblins, to fright us from its Precepts, is what we ought carefully to watch against, and whenever such attempts are made, we ought to rest assur'd, the Precepts of the Gospel are still right and good, whatever frightful Consequences by the Arts of Deceit, may seem to flow from them.

'Tis not my Design by thus arguing, in the least to shun the Force of the particular pretended Consequences here presented; but only in the general to arm your Caution against the unfairness, and fallacy of this way of arguing. 'Tis in short not so properly arguing against the Sense of the Scriptures,
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we contend, as against the Scriptures themselves, and endeavouring to fright us from attending, even its plain and positive Determinations, on account of the black and terrible Consequences feign'd to attend them. Tho' on Examination, the Laws of God will be found under any Application, entirely righteous and true: Yet by such Transitions as these, cunning and sophistical Men have always found themselves able to confound and perplex the Ignorant; and therefore when they are not able plainly and directly to oppose the Evidence of Divine Truth, 'tis their next Stratagem, to endeavour to present it in a false View, or else so to amuse the Mind with such foreign and distant Comparisons, as shall confound our Ideas of the Matter, and make us mistake the proper State of the Question in debate. But however, as in the Particulars before us, our Managers have left their Cause entirely on this Thin and Cobweb Subterfuge, and the Instances we are call'd on to consider, will not necessarily engage too much of our Time, it may not be unuseful, particularly to examine, whether our most strictly attending the Doctrine of the Cross, is subject to those dismal Consequences so industriously presented, or that the black Images we have plac'd before us, are not rather only the fictitious Monsters of their own teeming mischievous Imaginations?

To resume then the particular Instances objected, it may be readily observ'd, That how great soever the Latitude of Suffering may be, as requir'd by the Doctrine of the Cross; yet it is contended by none, to deny us the Liberty of appealing to the Magistrate, and therefore does not in its utmost Extent, on that Account, leave us wholly open and unguarded to the Outrages of the vilest Part of the World. 'Tis
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the greatest unfairness to present such imparal-
 Cases, which as they come not in the least under the
 Rule contended, so are plainly excepted both by
 the positive Determinations of Scripture, and all
 that know any Thing of this Controversy. The
 same also is the Case of a Robber, and a Cut-Throat.
 For the Magistrate not only bears the Sword for
 that very Purpose, to redress us against his Violence,
 but the immediate Voice of God has arm'd every
 Man for his Destruction; *If a Thief (we are told ex-
 pressly) be found breaking up before the Sun be risen,
 and be smitten that he dye, there shall be* *Exod. xxii.*
no Blood-shed for him. So that it is appa-
 rent the Distinction in these Cases is not ²³.

only founded in the Reason, and Decency of the
 Thing, but the positive Law of God, and the same
 Scripture that declares, none can lift up their Hand
 against the Lord's annointed and be guiltless, fully
 Warrants every Man to destroy a Thief, and a Rob-
 ber. The same Divine Warrant is given to every
 Prince, to defend himself and his Subjects against
 the Attempts of a foreign Prince, and he is appoint-
 ed by God himself, to use both his own and his Sub-
 jects Swords against the Invader. And his punish-
 ing his own wicked and rebellious Subjects, is so im-
 mediately his Duty, that he *bears the Sword* in the
 strictest Sense, *in Vain*, should he not unsheath it
 on such an Occasion: Christianity, we own, to a
 Prince, is a Doctrine of the Cross, as well as to his
 Subjects; but here is the Difference, Christianity
 has not put a Sword in the Hand of Subjects, as it
 has in that of a Prince, except (as we before obser-
 ved in the Case of a Robber) for the Punishment of
 evil Doers. When positive Texts of Scripture can
 be produc'd to warrant the one, as well as the other,
 we'll admit the Cases to be Parallel; but till then,

we must be allow'd even in common Decency, and good Manners, to distinguish between a King and a Cut-Throat, a Prince and a Robber.

'Tis very readily admitted we ought not to suffer under a Prince, when we can lawfully help, and can use honourable Means to avoid it; and it is as readily acknowledg'd, such are modest Remonstrances, flight from his unjust Fury, Prayers to God, to turn his Heart, &c. But if the Scripture be entirely silent, as to any other Means to be us'd, so far I think it may be said to be Silent; and if it only presses our Submission to them, we must and ought to be content to read it as we find it, and not Rack and Torture it, to speak Things as opposite to its Sense and positive Expressions, as Light is to Darkness.

To tell us, the supposing the Doctrine we contend for true, *represents the Christian Religion, as teaching Men to throw off all Care about the Happiness of humane Society, and to look upon themselves unconcern'd at the outward good Estate of their Families, their Neighbours, their Posterity, &c.* seems to represent Magistracy, and Laws entirely useless, and insignificant; and without Men can be allow'd, like wild Beasts, to rend and rear one another to Pieces, just as Humour and Resentment leads them, which is always call'd the Public Good, all Means of Self-preservation are presently deny'd them. These are the false Lights in which Things are represented to us by cunning and artful Men; and when we are not easily to be allur'd such Means as these must, be contriv'd

to

to fright us from our Duty. But let us no longer be thus impos'd on, nor so much consider what cunning Deceivers represent as the Consequences of our Duty, as whether it really be so reveal'd to us. This we may be infallibly sure of, that whatever is confirm'd by *thus saith the Lord*, is always True and Righteous, whatever imaginary Lions may be plac'd in our Way against its Practice, and that the Law of the Lord is perfect, and is not more enforc'd by the Authority of the Legislator, than the Justice and Reason of it in the Nature of the Thing.

THE wild perplexity with which this Controversy is manag'd throughout, will insensibly lead us to mix and confound the different Topics of *Scripture*, and *Reason*; and whatever may be the Airs of a Title Page, it may be easily observ'd, the Measures of Submission are not so much to be drawn from the particular Force, and Disquisition of any Text in Scripture, either in the Terms of its Language, or any necessary Implications, as from the vain tow'ring Imaginations of a bloated Fancy and arrogant Contempt of common Understandings. The Scriptures indeed must be Commented upon, and some little Attempts (even for the sake of Decency) made to give a Turn to their Sense; but this is only their Condescension, and bringing down their lofty Understandings to the common Mold; their chief Strength is plac'd elsewhere, and tho' indeed they may talk of Scripture; their own Idol, Reason, is what they'll alone be judged by. He must be very superficially read in this Controversy, that knows not Philosophy takes the right Hand of Faith: And tho' the Doctrine we contend, is indeed call'd, or at least was formerly so, the Doctrine of the Cross: Yet the Merit of the Cause is not to be tried by the

Sense of the Gospel, or the Example of a crucify'd Saviour: But by the stronger Biass of the Laws of Nature, and the always partial regard we have to those of Self-preservation.

TO these then, our Task now seems to require Attendance; and if we may but be indulg'd a few Reflections on what has already pass'd, with regard to the Holy Scriptures, we will not in the least fail to follow them yet further in their mighty Tracks of Reason.

IT is not my Design to carry the Reader so far in the Retrospect of what has pass'd, as to make a particular Induction of every thing, has been here presented; but thus much I perswade my self, he will conclude with me in the General, that on a Review of the whole Scripture, Old and New Testament, as the Practice of Resistance is in several Places condemn'd, and the Duty of Suffering earnestly recommended and encourag'd: So the Exceptions of Self-preservation, Public Good, &c. contended for, are no where either in Terms, or by necessary Implications in the least directed or encouraged in any Part of the said Holy Book; Consequently true is the first Proposition undertaken to be proved in this Work, *viz.* That the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience and Non-Resistance, or bearing Injuries with Patience and Submission, is absolutely commanded by the Gospel, and we may add further, very forcibly confirm'd in the main Instance disputed, by Example under the Law.

NEXT to the Nature of the Evidence given, the particular Confusion, and Uncertainty of that oppos'd to it, may not improperly a little come under

under our Consideration. When in the Instance of *David*, they are press'd with the Insufficiency of the Plea of Self-Defence, and Self-Preservation: Then 'tis not Private and Personal, but Public and National Defence is contended for. *As for any Resistance, but what is necessary on the Account of the Public, they are not all concern'd at in*; single and particular Persons it seems have no Right to Self-Defence; they may, nay, ought to submit to every Oppression; 'tis only Multitude can justify Opposition; tho' the Apostle in the very Place on which they would seem to Ground this Notion, directly applies himself to single Persons. *He, that is the Magistrate, is the Minister of God to THEE for Good*: Yet it is only whole Nations are included in the Consequence drawn from hence. But does not the Word *THEE*, signify every individual, as well as the whole of a Nation, and consequently conclude the same Right in one as the other? 'Tis needless to argue this from the Nature and Reason of Things. And indeed on a different Occasion, we have the Case of a single Person represented, as the same as that of a whole Nation. *The Consideration of the Character and Office* (we are told in the private Case of *St. Paul*) *of those who offer'd the Injuries, was so far from determining him to Pass them over with Silence, that it was the very Thing that made him look upon them, not as private Injuries, but with a Resentment due to Injuries of a public and universal Concern*. Here not the Number of the Persons aggriev'd, but the Nature of the Injury done, determines the Right of Opposition; and tho' it had not been justifiable for *David* to have resisted

to have sav'd his Life: Yet St. Paul, it seems, might have done it, to keep his Back from the Scourge. Who can argue with Men that thus shift their Principles with every fresh Scene of Debate, and take the Liberty of saying, and unsaying when ever they please?

BUT this we shall have larger Opportunities to consider in that which we have laid down as the Second general Proposition of this Work, *viz.*

THAT this Command of Passive-Obedience, and Non-Resistance, or bearing Injuries with Patience and Submission, even in the most absolute Extent, is highly reasonable in the Nature of the Thing, and as evidently founded in the rational Laws of our Nature, as the positive Injunctions of the Gospel.

THIS Part of the Controversy, I am sensible, will afford a large Field of Debate, and is what those we are engag'd with place their chief Strength in. Scripture may be mention'd, and commented upon for Form sake, but Reason is the great Wheel, on which our modern over-siz'd Understandings delight chiefly to turn. In order then to the settling, as well as we can, something of a Standard of this Nature, and to distinguish the true and real Reason of Things from the Falsehood of Appearance, and disguise; it seems necessary to lay down this incontestable Principle, *That the Will of our Maker is the Supreme Law of our Nature:* and tho' it may sometimes so happen, that this *Will* may clash with the Bent of Appetite, and the strongest and most Violent Biass of all our Sensations: Yet still it remains the rational Law of our Nature, and is still founded

founded in the true Rectitude, and impartial Justice thereof.

I AM very sensible, the Gentlemen we have to deal with, are no Friends at all to Absolute Monarchy; but when it is consider'd, that God Almighty himself is the Monarch, surely they will not covet a Common-Wealth. That Life and Being which we derive alone from his Infinite Goodness, certainly ought in Reason and Justice to be dispos'd of at his Will. The reasonableness of such a Sovereign Power in God himself, sure none will dare to dispute: But should any be guilty of the horrid Impiety, the Reason of all the World would condemn the Vanity, as well as Wickedness of it. For as it is the Voice of Reason, as well as Revelation, that from him at first, and *in him now we live, and move, and have our Being*: So it has the same Suffrage, that *whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we dye, we dye unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or dye, we are the Lord's*. This Property Almighty God has in us, both from Creation and Purchase, and how grating soever this Notion may be in some of its particular Applications, none, I believe, that own such a Being as a God, will oppose it in the general. *Friend, is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* is an Expostulation so home, as must Silence all Gain-sayers, but they who are such particular Contenders for Property, as the Gentlemen we have to deal with can't in Decency so much as hesitate. And are not we in the same Sense, God Almighty's own; *Doth not even Nature teach us, that he made us, and not we ourselves*; and that *we are his People, and the Sheep of his Pasture*? Who then can, who dare *resist his Will*? No! 'tis the Lord, let him do what seemeth him

him good. This is as strongly the Voice of Reason, as 'tis directly that of God.

THIS Premised, *viz.* That God Almighty is Supreme and Absolute Monarch over us, and that his Will is therefore the supreme, and incontestable Law of our Nature, what we have before offer'd, proving it in Fact to be his Will, that we should bear all sorts of Injury and Outrage with Patience, and the most quiet Submission: The Consequence, that it is therefore reasonable we should do so, must be irresistably plain. Certainly none will be so daring to dispute, whether we ought to obey the Will of our Maker, and whatever may be offer'd to the contrary, that is a Reason of that Nature, never to be superseded. Self-preservation, the Good of Society, and a thousand other such fashionable Amusements, weigh nothing in the Ballance against this; but whenever they are oppos'd to it, deserve no other Reply, than that of the Apostle, *Nay, but O Man, who art thou that repliest against God.*

No r but our Submission is necessary; were we to consider the Reason of the Command, abstracted from the Authority of the Commander, tho' something of this kind was proper to be mention'd, to awe Men into some Modesty in this Dispute, that they might not imagine the Injunctions of Heaven are to be dispens'd with, whenever they fondly think they have some formidable Objections against them. Wisdom may, and will be justified of all her Children; and such is the exact Justice and Equity of all the Laws of God, that they will bear the strictest Examination in every possible View. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Yes, undoubtedly; we are often assur'd, the Laws of the
Lord

Lord are Perfect, his Judgments true, and Righteous altogether. They are pure and undefil'd, full of Justice and Truth. These are the repeated Characters he himself has given of them; and therefore we need not be afraid of the vain Boasts of any against them. *O House of Israel, are not my Ways equal, and are not your Ways unequal?* This is the Condescensive Reasoning of God himself. It is freely own'd, God Almighty chuses to deal with us, not as an imperious and arbitrary Legislator, but a most candid and equitable Judge; and exacts nothing of us, but what, were we able to discern the Reason of it, as well as he, we ourselves should think highly reasonable, and fitting so to be; and this will yet further appear by a particular Examination of such other Topicks, as will naturally fall under our Consideration in the Course of this Controversy.

THERE is nothing, I believe, has more contributed to the casting a Mist over the Understandings of a great many People in this Dispute, than the not duly distinguishing between the violent and irregular Biases of our Appetites, and the impartial and calm Determinations of our Reason and Understanding. It is very strange, when our Holy Religion has so well instructed us in this Distinction, and that the Law of our Members, and the Law of our Mind, are the Terms in which an Apostle has exhibited it to us; that notwithstanding the former of these, which is indeed only the Disgrace and Corruption, should be call'd the Law of our Nature. But so it is, and that which is entirely the Effect of our First Parents Transgression, and has sunk all that is truly Great, and Worthy in our Nature, even to a level with the Brutes that Perish, is not only contended for as the GREAT LAW OF NATURE, as we are often told

told in the most pompous Manner, but is made with all the only Standard by which all Doctrines are to be tried and receive their final Sentence, whether true or false: But it must be insisted (and one would think it would not be disputed, even for the sake of the Dignity of humane Nature) that 'tis not our Passions and Appetites, but our Reason and Judgment is truly the great Law of Nature; and this we are taught, not only by Scripture, but Reason, and the brightest Moralists that ever wrote.

‘† NATURE, says *Plutarch*, as in those Trees, and Shrubs, which we call wild, she hath sown the Crude, and imperfect Principles of true and pleasant Fruits; so in Brutes hath implanted an imperfect Love to their Off-spring, not belonging to the Head of Justice, nor reaching beyond the Inducements of Profit and Advantage. But in Man, whom she produc'd for a rational and civil Being, for the worship of the Gods, for the building of Cities, and social and friendly Life: In Man, I say, she has fix'd the Seeds of this Love, in a fairer and more plentiful manner: And in this she hath follow'd the first Principles of his Body, and the original Ingredients of his Constitution.”

THIS τὸ ἡγούμενον, or governing Principle of Reason and Reflection in Man, is so universally distinguish'd by all the antient Moralists, from the sensitive Appetite, that certainly it needs no Pains to establish a Difference of that Nature. ‘There is, says

† *De Amore prolis*, p. 495.

' says *Aristotle*, the ζῶν σπερμικὴ καὶ αὐξήτικὴ, or Vegetative Life in Plants: αἰσθητικὴ the sensitive in Brutes: But the λογικὴ or rational Life is peculiar to Man only, who while he acts becoming the Dignity of his Nature, he makes those other Faculties he has in common with Plants and Brutes, subservient, and rul'd by this alone."

And indeed were not this, which is alone the peculiar Dignity of our Nature, the Supreme, and only Law that ought to govern it; Nature (as *Spinoza* observes, as resolv'd only into Sense, and Appetite) absolutely consider'd, has the highest Right of doing whatever it can; and consequently the strong have a Natural Right to prey on the Weak, * as he argues from the Example of *Fishes*. Or with *Hobbs*, we might say, Every Man is an Enemy to every Man, whom he neither serves nor obeys no further than it strikes in with the Pleasures of Sense.

THE Learned *Puffendorf* represents Man void of Acquirements, and only following the wild Bent of his Appetite, the most miserable Creature Imagination can Form; and tho' that great Man does in some Measure concede, that amidst all his wild Extravagancies, he does follow the Dictates of Nature: Yet when it is consider'd such Appetites had been impossible to our Nature, had it not been for its fall from its pristine Innocence and Rectitude, nothing can thence be justly concluded, as the Law of our Na-

Aristot. Ethic. Nicomach. Lib. i. Cap. 6.

* *Spinoza* in his Theologico-Political Treatise. *Hobbs de cive* cap. 9. §. 3.

Nature, but only the Degeneracy and Depravation of it.

By the great Law of Nature then, so much talk'd of in this Controversy, we being not to understand the Bounds of our Passions and Appetites, but the free and unbiass'd resolves of our Reason: It will easily be perceiv'd, what Reason we had to insist, the Doctrine we contend for, is evidently founded in the rational Laws of our Nature. For it is not to be imagin'd, considering the Law of our Nature only to be taken from our Sensations, that Suffering of all Things in the World would go down with them. *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath will he give for his Life*, was good Natural Logic enough in the Devil, when he supposes us only to argue from the immediate Emotions of our Senses, and such Suggestions as they would prompt us to attend. But the great Law of our Nature, is the great Law of Reason, which as it is fix'd in our very Essence by God Almighty himself to be the governing Principle of all our Actions: So when ever we let that of Sense and Appetite assume its Place, we as much violate the proper and genuine Laws of our Nature, as we do the positive and written Laws of God.

THE Rule thus fix'd, and distinguish'd, our next Business is to reduce it to Application in the present Controversy; which we shall be best able to do by considering (as far as we are inform'd) First, the Nature of God; and how far the Doctrine contended may be suppos'd in Reason to Comport with it: And Secondly, The Nature of ourselves; both with regard to God and our mutual Intercourse with one another.

AND

AND first then, let us, as far as we can gather both from Reason and Revelation, consider the Nature of God.

BOTH of these then readily assuring us, that the Deity is a Being of Infinite Perfection, and the particular Ideas our Minds are capable of entertaining of such Perfection, being best made known to us by what we generally call the Divine Attributes: A distinct Consideration of them, with regard to either their Harmony or Disagreement with the Doctrine we contend for, will sufficiently determine in the Point before us, and take in those Objections that are commonly made under this Head in this Controversy.

IT would abundantly exceed the Limits of our present Design, to enter into a particular Consideration of the Nature, and variety of what we generally call the Divine Attributes: But as Two of them are more immediately urg'd (by those who have engag'd of late, with more than ordinary Zeal, for the Doctrine of Resistance) against what has been hitherto contended, it may not be improper to consider them, at least so far as concerns the present Debate.

WE are told then it is inconsistent with the Goodness and Justice of Almighty God, to suppose he should subject the whole Body of the Govern'd to every possible Violence of the Governor; and on this Head, abundance of Art, and Declamation is us'd to persuade us not to believe it, tho' it were never so plainly reveal'd in the Gospel.

BUT

BUT to this it ought to be observ'd, That tho' upon an exact and impartial Examination, every Law and Precept of the Gospel will be found to Comport with both the Justice, and Goodness of Almighty God, and that it is impossible for him to exact any Thing of us as a Duty, but what is truly consistent with all his Divine Attributes: Yet presently to reject and slight any of the positive Precepts of the Gospel, because in our shallow Way of Thinking, we can't reconcile them to what we imagine to be his Justice, Goodness, &c. is one of the most daring and unwarrantable Pieces of Presumption; and what, tho' it is very common in this Licentious Age, deserves a severer Animadversion, than I have Authority to bestow on it.

BUT because we are so often and so noisily entertain'd in this Controversy, with this Topic, let us consider, whether such a Submission in Subjects, under all those frightful and aggravated Circumstances, which they we have to deal with only delight to dress it up in, may Comport with these Notions we may, or at least ought to have of the Justice, and Goodness of God.

TO punish Sin, and more particularly that of a whole Nation, or Society, must surely be allow'd to consist, both with the Notion of Divine Goodness and Justice; let us consider then such wicked and tyrannical Governors plac'd over us by God Almighty, as the Scourges of our Impieties. Shall not the Infinite Wisdom of Almighty God be allow'd the Choice of what Methods he thinks proper, for the Punishment of a wicked and impious Nation; with-

without having his Justice and Goodness araign'd? Surely such Gentlemen will consider before they venture on such bold Blasphemies as these! And yet what is there in this Supposition, but what Scripture and Reason will very easily suggest?

I AM very sensible how necessary some Gentlemen will find it, to give this Argument a wrong Turn, and tell us the same may be said of *Fevers, Plagues, Fires, Inundations, Tempests*, and the like. But let it be here consider'd, that the Question is not, whether such Evil ought to be submitted to without any Opposition, upon their being the Judgments of Almighty God? But whether it is not consistent with the Justice and Goodness of Almighty God, sometimes to punish a wicked People this Way? It is the Observation, I believe it will be allow'd, of the best Casuists, That National Sins consider'd as such, are only punishable in this World; and what greater and more adequate Punishment can be suppos'd to be allotted to a wicked and irreligious People, than that of the Heart of him, or them, who is set over them, being turn'd and entirely bent on their Destruction and Ruin?

IT may certainly therefore be very Just in God, thus to punish a wicked and rebellious People; and as certainly it cannot be suppos'd to clash with his Goodness even in those soft Notions of it, we are willing to entertain; for certainly that which is proper for his Justice to do, will never be found at all inconsistent with his Goodness. However our wild
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* Measures of Submission, p. 85.

and ungovernable Passions Jarr, and are at Discord one with another, the Attributes of God always bear the exactest Harmony with each other, and all Concentre in the Perfection of the Deity.

BUT upon yet further Reflection, it may be made appear equally Rational, that such a Procedure in God Almighty, is exactly consistent with his Goodness, not only as it is always consistent with his Justice, and so consequently agrees with the particular Methods his infinite Wisdom shall make choice of for our Punishment: But as that Goodness is express'd in the most tender regard for us, and made the distinguishing Evidence of our being his peculiar Favourites. To the Truth of this, all History both Sacred and Prophane, gives in its Testimony. They that would have Virtue and Goodness always attended with Prosperity and Success, little consider how acceptable to God, Fortitude, Patience, and many other of the most Magnanimous, and truly noble Virtues of even the best of Men are, all which find only their Exercise in Affliction. Since therefore God Almighty has been always pleas'd to put even his greatest Favourites to these sort of Trials in order to illustrate both his own Glory, and their Virtues; what is there in the Choice of even a wicked and tyrannical Prince, for his Instrument to that Purpose, inconsistent with his Goodness? and since his End for so doing, is really in the Issue of Things both for his own Glory, and our Good; what can there in Reason and Justice be objected against his infinite Goodness, if sometimes for such wise and gracious Purposes he does subject us to the lash of their Power?

WE are told in the sacred Language, not only of the *Staff*, but even the *Rod*, sometimes being design'd for our Comfort; and without some such Notion or Principle as this, it is impossible to account for that Joy, and exceeding alacrity with which the Holy Martyrs and Confessors of the Christian Religion, fac'd even the greatest Trials and Sufferings. Of all Things in the World they never arraign'd the Goodness of God; because they were so serv'd, nor indeed entertain'd the least Thought, that he was wanting in his Kindness towards them.

IT is very apparent therefore, that if it be our Duty to submit, even to the greatest Tyranny and Oppression; there is nothing in such a Notion at all inconsistent with either the Justice or Goodness of God, even in his tenderest regard for his Creatures; consequently they that would fright us from the Belief of this Doctrine with Pretences of this kind, are not at all to be regarded.

BUT it happens in this Case, as in many others of a like Nature, that since the Doctrine insisted on is too good and too Holy to be made to appear odious, and absurd in its own Native and Genuine Dress; therefore for that Purpose, it must be disguis'd and misrepresented, and made to speak in such a manner, as must justly render it odious and detestable both to God and Man. 'Tis not therefore, that we are oblig'd to submit quietly to the ill Usage of our Governors, because it is the Will of God that so we should do, either as our present State is a State of Tryal, or it may be so order'd for the Punishment of our Sins; with many other Reasons,

of which the infinite Wisdom of God alone is to be the Judge: No, this is what they are willing entirely to pass over; and because we insist, that the violent resisting of wicked and tyrannical Governors, is, as the Apostle informs us, resisting the Ordinance of God, and thereby receiving to ourselves Damnation; therefore they will have it taken for granted, that every Outrage, and possible Violence of wicked and tyrannical Princes, is back'd with an immediate Commission from God, and they are empower'd by him so to act.

THE Blasphemy and absurdity of this Notion, is what some, nay all who have engag'd in this Controversy, and are the Patrons of Resistance, are very fond to expatiate on; and were it not generally represented by them with abundance of Triumph, as a full Confutation of the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience, and Non-Resistance, they should find no interruption from me in the Satisfaction they give themselves by haranguing on this Topic, for Pages together. But as the whole of such an extravagant Notion is only a Figment of their own Brain, and asserted by none, but those who know not what they talk, and themselves; it cannot be unuseful, so distinctly to State the whole of what we contend for in the present Controversy, as may at once vindicate the Honour of God, and clear the at present so much exploded Doctrine of Passive-Obedience and Non-Resistance, from the Calumny of making him the Author, and Encourager of Evil.

THAT we may proceed in this Matter with all possible plainness, it is necessary to observe, That tho' in the Language of an Apostle, we are ready to own, there is no Power but of God, and that it is his Will

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we should in all Cases, either actively or passively, submit to every Instance of the Determinations of the Magistrate, and upon no pretence whatever oppose them by Arms and Violence: Yet we are very free to own every Instance of Tyranny and Oppression, is void of all Authority from God; and is directly a Breach of that Commission given them by God, as Magistrates: But of such Breaches of their Commission, God alone is the Judge, so as to censure or punish them, and has strictly commanded us to refer every thing of this kind to him.

THAT this in Fact is the Case, I refer to be determin'd by the preceding Part of these Papers: What is at present more immediately to be observ'd is, That upon Supposition this is entirely true, it does not make God, as is pretended, the Author and Encourager of Tyranny, but only reserves to himself alone the Power of punishing it. And pray where is the Absurdity and Blasphemy of this, in charging of which some People are so Noisy? Shall God Almighty be said to license and encourage Wickedness, because he does not punish it just in the Methods we would have him? Is not he able to do both us, and his own righteous Laws Justice, without our being the Instruments thereof? What unaccountable Prejudice, and Fondness for a Cause must it be, that can make any intelligent Man talk at this Rate?

'Tis true, in many Instances the most abominable Wickedness and Outrage, have in this World seem'd to pass with Impunity; Divine Vengeance has no where visibly appear'd in its Punishment:

But is the wickedness of Magistrates only thus suffer'd to Escape? How narrow must his Observation both of Men and Things have been, who can pretend to say so? What then? shall we conclude from such Appearances, that the Judge of all the Earth will not do right? No certainly. However Things may pass here, there will come a Time when every Thing will be rectify'd; one Day is appointed for trying the greatest Monarch that ever was upon Earth, with the same Justice and Impartiality as the meanest Beggar; and this is alone a sufficient Consideration to vindicate both the Honour and Justice of God; and might, one would think, Silence those vain Men who so idly arraign i.

BUT further; Is not God a God of infinite Power, as well as Justice and Goodness? How comes it then, that it is not equally an Impeachment of that, as well as the other Attributes, that he does not always assist and strengthen the Hearts and Hands of oppressed Subjects in their Distress, according to some Gentlemen's noble Struggles for Liberty and Self-Defence? Were it so entirely inconsistent with his Honour and Goodness, to subject whole Societies, or Bodies of Men, to the Arbitrary Will and Pleasure of their Governors, as is often in this Controversy tragically represented, it is very strange his Omnipotence should not think itself as much concern'd to interpose in the Cause of injur'd Subjects, as these Men would have us believe his Goodness and Justice does. If it be said here, that God Almighty is infinitely Wise, as well as infinitely Powerful, and therefore it must and ought to be referr'd to that, to determine when his Power shall engage for the thorough righting of his Creatures; 'tis resolving the Methods of Divine Providence

vidence, in its Government of the World, into that humble Modesty, and awful deference to the infinite Perfection of the Deity, as becomes the shallow Apprehensions, the utmost stretch of humane Sagacity can possibly have of the unsearchable Judgments and Proceedings thereof. And how many imaginary Difficulties would this single Thought have clear'd up in this Controversy? And did not a vain fondness of prescribing Rules to the Conduct of God himself, take too much place in our Thoughts, how readily would the Doctrines of the Gospel be entertain'd in the World, and how free from that Absurdity, which some love to charge them with, would they appear?

SINCE then it may very well consist, both with the Goodness and Justice of God, to permit a Nation, a whole Nation, as some love to speak, to lie under the Lashes of a wicked and tyrannical Prince; either as a Trial of their Faith, Obedience, Patience, or the like, or for the Punishment of their Sins; and it is evident, even in Fact, by his Almighty Power not interposing in Cases of this Nature: It may reasonably be hop'd, we shall be harangu'd no more in this Controversy with the Charge of Blasphemy, and I know not what imaginary formidable Consequences, which some Gentlemen would pretend to fright themselves withal, or at least, take a great deal of Pains to make them appear dreadful to other People, should at last the hated Doctrine of Passive-Obedience prove to be true.

AND since it is very agreeable to those rational Notions we have of the Deity, that so it may be; certainly when we are satisfy'd of his Will by

Revelation, it ill becomes us, if we are not willing to practice this holy and peaceable Doctrine, to be always perversely disputing against it, or daubing it over with such black and odious Colours, as shall render it frightful to the Beholders. It would really surprise a Man to see the unfair Practices of this Nature. What Art does all the Wit and Cunning of its Adversaries use, to dress it up in every hideous Form? and there is nothing in Nature, in some Men's way of arguing, so wicked and abominable, but what may be charg'd on this Doctrine. 'Tis an Encourager of Tyrants, nay, of Robbers, and Cut-Throats, as some tell us. But after all, what Encouragement is it to any Thing, but an Atheist, to be told, that only God will be the punisher of his Wickedness? Is his Almighty Arm then to be stop'd, and the Vials of his Vengeance so easily diverted, that they should appear less formidable, than Swords and Muskets in the Hands of rebellious Subjects?

IT is really surprizing to see, what unaccountable Extravagancies some Gentlemen, and those too of the first Character, run themselves into in the Management of this Debate. If it be once admitted our Hands are ty'd up from all Resistance against our Governors, then are they, it seems, equally ty'd up from resisting Robbers and Cut-Throats, a Foreign Prince invading of us, or indeed any Thing which they are pleas'd to fancy or say. What Grounds they have for these odd and odious Comparisons, is very hard to guess. It cannot surely ly in the exactness of the Parallel; for certainly, as long as there is any such Thing as a Distinction or Difference to be made, Cases in their Nature so widely distant, can never be made alike. We have already
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taken some Notice of this wild Method of arguing, in some of the Instances here mention'd : But such a Stress is laid upon it, and what is said of this kind, is so much and so often repeated, that it cannot be amiss a little further to consider, what can possibly be meant by it.

THE Reasons we give, why we think it unlawful to resist even the unjust Violence of our Princes and Governors, to Name no other, is, because we think it is the Will of God we should submit to them ; and he has declar'd, as we think, in the plainest Terms, that none can resist them and be guiltless, and they that do resist them, shall receive to themselves Damnation. But what of this kind can be said in the Case of a Thief, or a Robber, or a Foreign Prince ? Has God Almighty any where in Scripture said the same in their Case ? Where then lies the Parallel ? So far is he from it in the former Instance, that he has not only put the Sword into the Magistrates Hand for that very End, that he might punish them ; but when their Attacks are at such Times, and attended with such Circumstances, that we cannot immediately have the Assistance of the Magistrate, he has by a positive and express Law empower'd every Man to kill and destroy them. In the Case of a Foreign Prince, we are bound by the Duty and Allegiance we owe to our own Native Prince, to assist him against every Attack of that kind ; and by refusing even so much as active Obedience, when he gives us a legal Call thereto, we resist both him and the Ordinance of God ; and so it is deem'd all the World over, at least one may be very sure the same Reasons, that hold good against our resisting our own Prince or Governors, can never

be any ways made to bear in the Case of a Foreign Prince.

BUT they, who with all their pretended Fairness and Candour in Controversy, find it absolutely necessary to have this Matter so perplex'd and confounded, as that it may not readily be understood, give the Question here in Debate a wrong Turn; and in order to prove these their dreadful and monstrous Parallels upon the Holy and Innocent Doctrine, they would hereby blacken and run down, put the Question upon the Right of the Assailants, to do so and so, and not whether it is the Will of God, that we should submit to the one, tho' not to the other.

AND here, that we may set this Matter in as clear a Light as possible, it is at once freely and openly own'd: That the Thief, the Cut-Throat, or the Foreign Prince, have an equal Right (or Authority, call it what you will, if by it you mean no more than a moral and just Power) to Plunder and Murder us, as our own Prince has so to do. Every Instance of this Nature, is as unjust, nay, and we believe, more abominable in the Sight of God, in him than them. But yet, if it pleases God to reserve the Punishment of such a wicked Prince to himself, and forbid us, in any Case, to resist him by Arms and Violence, certainly none will be so bold to deny it to be our Duty so to do. For tho' he indeed has no Right to such our Submission: Yet surely when God Almighty himself exacts it of us, his Right is not sure to be disputed; This then in Fact, we insist to be the Case; and how far it is consistent with the Honour and Goodness of God, so
to

to make it, we have before consider'd, and therefore shall here decline the Repetition.

NOR will this Doctrine, when it is fairly stated, appear less consistent with the infinite Wisdom of God, than his Goodness and Justice: For as both Reason and Revelation assure us, that this Attribute of Almighty God will always determine his Choice to that which is best and fittest to be done, and the latter has expressly declar'd him to be the God of Order, and not of Confusion, the Nature of Government itself necessarily requiring such absolute Submission in the Subject, as is contended; and without it nothing but Anarchy and Confusion immediately taking Place; the very Wisdom of God, as it is evidently Conspicuous in his Government of the World, as well as in all his other Attributes, must be suppos'd at least so far to engage by his Laws, as to prevent every Tendency to a Thing which is so contrary to his Nature.

THIS, tho' it has been indeed plainly and openly deny'd by one Gentleman: Yet it must be observ'd he is so particular therein, as not only manifestly to oppose the common and receiv'd Sense of all the World, but even some of the most * eminent Character, who have been thought to have engag'd on his Side. 'Tis opposing the Sense of all the World, because thus far it is agreed, and determin'd by the Laws of every Nation, ever yet known

* I do allow, in all Governments whatsoever, there is an absolute Power lodg'd somewhere.

Vide Speech of the Lord Bishop of Oxford at Dr. Sacheverel's Tryal.

known or heard of, that it is Treason and Rebellion for the govern'd to rise up, and take up Arms against their Governours, be the pretence what it will. He that thinks the contrary of this, let him go to *Holland, Venice*, or where he will, and produce a Law to indemnify him.

BUT however, as the Gentleman to whom I before alluded, has been generally thought to have manag'd this Controversy so much better than all who have been before him, and the Dispute is so directly brought to affirming and denying; a more particular regard to his Reasons, especially as he tells us, *they have been often propos'd, but never consider'd*, will not be thought tedious, tho' the giving them in his own Words (without which we shall never be thought fairly to have represented his Sense) must put us to a long Transcription.

‘ THE Nature of Government (then says he) doth
 ‘ indeed require the contrary : It being inconsistent
 ‘ with the Ends of it, that any one should be
 ‘ vested with Authority sufficient and effectual to
 ‘ destroy the very Ends for which it was instituted.
 ‘ This is so visible in Families, that one End of the
 ‘ Institution of Civil Government is, to restrain and
 ‘ punish the Abuses of Power in Family Government.
 ‘ And indeed this Assertion is only a fair
 ‘ begging of the Question, which is, Whether the
 ‘ Power of the Civil Magistrate be unlimited ? That
 ‘ is in other Words, Whether the Nature of his Office
 ‘ require it so to be ? But what ? Is it the End
 ‘ of that Office, that one particular Person may do
 ‘ what he pleaseth, without any Restraint ; or that
 ‘ Society should be made happy and secure ? Who
 ‘ will say the former ? And if the latter be the
 ‘ true

' true End of it, a less Power than Absolute will
' Answer it. Nay, an Absolute Power, is a Power
' to destroy that End, and therefore is inconsistent
' with the End it self. Can any one say, that a Prince
' cannot have Authority to do Good, without ha-
' ving Authority to do Mischief? Whence can he
' have this Authority? Not from God, because he
' can give no Commission to any thing that is Evil:
' Consequently not from the Nature of his Office,
' because then God must be suppos'd to approve of
' his having it, as he must approve his enjoy-
' ing all Things necessary to his Office; which
' is absurd. And if his Commission can't be sup-
' pos'd to give him this Authority; whence comes
' his Title to an unlimited Obedience? This hath
' often been propos'd, but never consider'd or an-
' swer'd otherwise than by naked Assertions. But I
' ask, Cannot a Father have Authority for Family
' Government, if his Children and Domesticks have
' a Liberty of examining his Commands, and of
' refusing Obedience to some Sort of them; as they
' are commanded to do by God himself? This no
' one denys, with respect to Active Obedience:
' Which yet is the main Support to all Government.
' Cannot the Leader of an Army have the Power
' requisite to his Office, unless his Soldiers and Offi-
' cers be oblig'd to obey him, tho' they all see him
' so mad, as to Command them to leap down a Pre-
' cipice, or to Stab one another? Cannot a Master
' have Authority for his Ruling over his Servants,
' without their being oblig'd to offer their Necks
' and Lives to all his Attacks? And can't a Civil
' Governor have Authority enough for the answer-
' ing the Ends of his Government, without having
' too much for it? Cannot he have Authority to
' punish a Criminal, without having Authority to
' Murder

‘ Murder the Innocent? And is it not sufficient
 ‘ for his Office, that Criminals must be brought to
 ‘ suffer their due Punishment, but must the Inno-
 ‘ cent, for whose Defence he is set, be ruin’d by
 ‘ him, for fear he should not have Power enough
 ‘ to defend them from those who are so? What the
 ‘ Meaning of this strange Assertion can be, I can’t
 ‘ imagine, unless it be this, that if any particular
 ‘ be oppos’d or resisted, so as to be shaken off for
 ‘ the sake of all the Evil imaginable, then this par-
 ‘ ticular Ruler must be hinder’d by this, from pro-
 ‘ secuting or answering the true Ends of his Office
 ‘ in any Instances. And what then? What if he
 ‘ be? It is as manifest, that the Ends of Govern-
 ‘ ment may be better answer’d in pressing Necessi-
 ‘ ties, by lodging the Supreme Authority in new
 ‘ Hands, as it is, that it is often necessary to change
 ‘ the subordinate and deputed Magistrates: And it
 ‘ may as well be argu’d, that if an unlimited Sub-
 ‘ mission be not acknowledg’d to be due to these,
 ‘ how shall the Guilty be punish’d? As it is in the
 ‘ Case of the Supreme. I say not, that other Con-
 ‘ siderations may not make a great Difference: But
 ‘ I say, that as to this Argument drawn from the
 ‘ Nature of their Office, they bid as fair for an un-
 ‘ limited Submission as any others. I say likewise,
 ‘ that tho’ other Considerations must determine par-
 ‘ ticular Subjects to a peaceable Submission, to some
 ‘ particular Acts of Injustice; yet it will puzzle all
 ‘ the Wit of Man, to make this appear but proba-
 ‘ ble, that because a Man is call’d to the Office of
 ‘ administering Justice, and doing good to Society,
 ‘ therefore, and upon that Account it is indispensi-
 ‘ bly necessary, that this Society should entirely
 ‘ submit itself to him, when he decree and admini-
 ‘ sters Injustice, Oppression, and universal Misery:

‘ Or

‘ Or to shew that the Nature and End of his Office,
‘ doth not strongly imply the contrary.”*

WE are told by the Gentleman, from whom all this and a great deal more comes, which we shall consider in its Place, that he had been the longer on this Argument, because it is of great Importance to the Cause before us: I perfectly concur with him thus far, and therefore hope ’twill sufficiently apologize for the length of this Quotation. To come now to the particular Reasons alledg’d.

IT is observ’d then, first, ’tis inconsistent with the Ends of Governments, to suppose any such Thing as an Absolute Power, because such a Power admitted would destroy them. This, I must own, is roundly asserted; but what does this Gentleman think of the Government of Heaven itself? Is not that govern’d by an Absolute Power? therefore certainly it can’t be always a just Conclusion, that wherever there is an Absolute Power, the Ends of Government are destroy’d; no, tho’ that Power or Authority were vested in only one single Being.

I MUST own, I am ready to believe the haste and zeal with which, what is here presented, was wrote, did not allow Time for a full Consideration of every possible Instance that might be produc’d of Absolute Power; but as the Supposition of such a Power in the general, is so peremptorily Asserted to be inconsistent with the Ends of Government, thus much I thought at least necessary to mention.

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* Examination of the Patriarchal Scheme, p. 26 to 29.

A COMPARISON of this Nature, I am sensible, will be immediately quarrell'd with by those we are engag'd with; but after the utmost that can be said about the Disparity of Circumstances, what we would only conclude from it can never be denyed, That the most perfect of all Governments is Absolute, and consequently such a Government in the general, can't be inconsistent with the Ends of any Government, and therefore to assert it to be so, is false.

LET it not be imagin'd, 'tis my Design to put this Debate only upon this single Issue; I am very ready to put the Question as 'tis afterwards propos'd, *viz.* Whether the Nature of the Thing requires it should be so? And not beg, but I humbly hope to prove the Affirmative Part thereof.

IN order to do this with the less perplexity, and quit the Controversy of those many Captious, and really I can't help calling them impertinent Questions and Comparisons, which this Writer seems to be fond of making, I shall distinctly state what I mean by, and contend to be the Absolute Power, which I assert to be necessary to, and the very Essence of the Civil Power, and without which it cannot at all subsist.

'TIS then such a Power, however abus'd, as must by no means be resisted by Arms and Violence; accountable, severely accountable to God, but not to us. A Power from which there is no Appeal, but to God; and tho' indeed not at all Commissioned by him to wrong or hurt us, yet if it should do so, we must patiently submit to it, not only because

cause it his Will that so we should do; but, which is a Reason perhaps we may like better, the Nature, and very Essence of Government, can't be preserved without it.

I NEED not, I think, after this, take any Pains to convince the Reader, that a Soldier is oblig'd actively to obey every mad and extravagant Command of his Leader; which it is this Writer's Talent, contrary to all Sense and Reason, to suppose, only as I can conceive, to perplex and confound those that read him; because all the Instances of Active Obedience are agreed to be under Limitations, and allow'd to be so by all, even by himself. Nor shall I at all concern my self with the many Questions put about the Nature and Extent of the Commission given the Magistrate by God, this having before been sufficiently, I hope, consider'd: But what I shall entirely confine my self to, is, what the Nature and End of Government itself must require in the Case of Passive-Obedience, or Submission to its Determinations.

AND this I must still think to be an Absolute Submission; and that for this plain and obvious Reason, because the very Nature and Essence of all Government consists in being the Dernier Refort, or last and final Decider of all Disputes: From which on Earth there neither can, nor ought to be any further Appeal. This is so evident and glaring a Truth, and indeed a contrary Notion would so effectually unhinge the World, and throw all Things into Disorder and Confusion, that the very Writer himself, we are disputing with, allows it true in all, what he loves to call *private Cases*; that is, Reader, if you or I, or Ten, or Twenty more, are never so much oppress'd

oppress'd and wrong'd by the Decisions of the Magistrate, we are oblig'd to submit; Nay, we are oblig'd both in Duty and Conscience to do it: But then if the Case touches a whole Society, for this too is another of *the Terms of Art*; then we are oblig'd and ought to resist.

I M U S T own, I can't but commend the Prudence of this Writer in this Distinction, because it must ever be allow'd that Ten or Twenty Thousand Men in Arms, may be suppos'd to resist the Determinations of a Government, with much more Safety than Ten or a Dozen: But however, as this is not avow'd to be the Reason of this fine Distinction, our next Business is to consider such as he is pleas'd to give us.

W E L L then, supposing the Case Public and Universal, as is always the big Sound, with which this Controversy must be presented, what are the Reasons that will justify Ten or Twenty Thousand Men in rising in Arms against the Government?

T H E Answer to this, is in one Place of this Gentleman's Writings thus, '*The Law of Nature, and of God, which allow of Self-Defence, and Self-Preservation in Societies, as well as particular Persons.*' *

I H A V E been told, that a mighty fine Free-thinking Gentleman has observ'd of this Writer, *That none of his numerous Adversaries could ever take*
him

* Examination of the Patriarchal Scheme, p. 30.

him Napping; 'tis not my Design to enter the Lists with this Coffee-house Champion; but without any Impeachment of his Sagacity, surely it must be allow'd here, Mr. *Benjamin Hoadly* did at least take a Nod, tho' the Bishop of *Bangor* may have never since dreamt of it. For that Self-Defence should be deny'd to private Persons, tho' never so much wrong'd by the Decisions of their Governors; and as such, that they should be distinguish'd from the Public, or whole Society; and yet when this whole Society is said by the Law of Nature, and of God, to have the Power of Self-Defence and Self-Preservation, that no other Reason should be given for this, than that all particular or private Persons have such a Power, is such an unaccountable inconsistency and slip in Reasoning, as must sure have sprain'd and strangely distorted a common Understanding.

THAT private and particular Persons should be allow'd to resist the Determinations of their Governors, is a Position so odious, that the utmost Complaint is frequently made of being charg'd with it; consequently should they be never so much aggrieved, they must by all means acquiesce, and not disturb the public Peace. * Well then, in the Case of private Persons, all Resistance to Governors is unlawful, even in his own Sense; where then is their Right of Self-Defence and Self-Preservation? No where it seems, when they are wrong'd by the Magistrate; consequently should a whole Society thus suffer, they have no Remedy, nor can they make any further Appeal, without their Right of Self-Defence, &c. is more extensive than that of particular

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* See Answer to Dr. *Atterbury*, p. 92.

particular and private Persons. That such their Right is not more extensive, is evident, in that it is drawn from it, and compar'd to it; therefore if it be once admitted, that private Persons have not a Right of Self-Defence, and Self-Preservation, that of a whole Society must be the same; But private Persons, 'tis agreed on all Sides, have no such Right in the Case before us; consequently whole Societies are in the same Case equally excluded.

By this it will easily appear, how little occasion there is for the fine Distinction between public and private Wrongs, so often mention'd in this Debate; and what Service it does, as the Argument is here stated, the Cause it is brought for: But as this may be thought only quarrelling with the Form rather than with the Matter of the Argument, let us now more particularly enter into the Consideration of that.

THIS then is said to be founded in *the Law of Nature*, and of *God*. 'Tis sometimes call'd a *Commission from God*: the *Will of God*, and in short by every other awful Name, which the World is generally apt to Esteem and Reverence. But after all these fine pompous Expressions which are us'd about it, it is no more at last, than Self-Defence, and Self-Preservation, and as such, neither a Law of God nor Man in many Cases, and is indeed at bottom, nothing else, but barely a Bias, or Instinct of Nature common to Brutes, and even Plants as well as Men.

'Tis not a Law of God, because we are positively in many Cases required to sacrifice our Lives voluntarily to his Commands: 'Tis not a Law of Man, be-

because all the World over, the Malefactor is deem'd to have no Right thereto; nor is indeed any Law at all, wanting that which is the very Essence of a Law, a Power to oblige and determine the Subject. *Lex est à ligando*, is a known and establish'd Definition, both with the Lawyer and Moralist, of a Law: But sure it cannot be pretended a Sin in the Martyr to break this Instinct or Propensity of Nature, by not fighting with the Persecutor; And if not, how can it be deem'd a Law of Nature for a Man to preserve and defend his Life. Were it a Law of Nature, it were always a Sin to break it: But for a Man voluntarily to submit to Death for the true Faith, is so far from being a Crime, that it is a Glory, and what all good Christians have ever esteem'd so.

It cannot be call'd a Commission, because that always is peculiar only to some, but this must be confess'd common and equal to all; nor can it upon any account be call'd the Will of God; because 'tis plainly in the Case of the Magistrate against his Laws.

By this the Intelligent Reader will easily observe how much the World has been amus'd and confounded by the Pompous Epithets which have been continually founded in our Ears about Self-Defence, and Self-Preservation; of its being a Law, the great Law of Nature, and I know not what; whereas it is nothing else in itself, but an instinct or natural Bias of Inclination, or Property given by God Almighty, almost in common to all the several Parts of the Creation for the general Conservation of the whole. Hence 'tis the Trench strikes immediately into the Mud at the sight of the Net, and even the Worm it

self slips into the Ground at the sound of Feet; and indeed all the Parts of Nature seem to bear a Share in this Law, if so it must be call'd, even to Things inanimate. For Plants will naturally dispose the Fibres of their Roots to the most agreeable Ground in their reach; and the Ivy, we all know, will cling to the Oak for its Preservation.

To draw an Argument therefore against Submission to Government, because there is in every Man, as well as all sensitive Animals, a natural Instinct or Fear of Pain, or Loss, that prompts our sensitive Faculties to oppose them, let them come in what Shape they will; is what the Logicians call a *non sequitur*, and concludes nothing.

BUT waving this at present, and admitting all the fine Things they talk of about Self-Preservation, &c. to be true; how comes it that this Law is only the Privilege of a great many? Why may not a single Man defend his Life against the Determinations of the Magistrate, as well as a Thousand? This, I must own, is what gives our Casuists some Difficulty, and makes them, when they are pinch'd hard with it, willing wholly to drop all their Arguments drawn from Self-Defence, and turn them on another Foundation, very distinct therefrom, which they call *Public Good*.

THE manner of giving this Reason being pretty much labour'd by the Gentleman we have had so often occasion to recur to, I shall again take the Pains to transcribe him. 'Whatever Submission then, says he, is requir'd by Law, or practis'd by good Subjects, in case of unjust Judgments, or unrighteous Decrees of Courts of Judicature, is not requir'd

or

‘ or practis’d, because of any Authority in the Judge
 ‘ to Decree Injustice : But because Public Good re-
 ‘ quires that private and particular Persons should
 ‘ rest satisfy’d with one certain Decision of their
 ‘ mutual Quarrels. Public Good requires that there
 ‘ should be Judges to pass Judgment in Cases of pri-
 ‘ vate Differences about *Meum* and *Tuum*; in Dis-
 ‘ putes about Title and Possession. And as long as
 ‘ their Determinations are consistent with, or instru-
 ‘ mental to the general Good of the Community,
 ‘ tho’ they should be mistaken or misled in some par-
 ‘ ticular Instances, yet Submission ought to be paid
 ‘ to them. But this doth not imply, that these
 ‘ Judges have Authority, properly so call’d, to de-
 ‘ cide so much as one Cause to the Wrong and Injury
 ‘ of any ; but only, that tho’ the Cause be decided
 ‘ injuriously to one particular Person, that particu-
 ‘ lar Person shall acquiesce, not for his sake who de-
 ‘ cided it, but for the sake of the Public Good,
 ‘ which otherwise can’t be preserv’d. And thus far
 ‘ I have always contended for Submission to the un-
 ‘ just Decisions and Acts of Princes, *viz.* as far as
 ‘ Public Good can be preserv’d by, and consist with
 ‘ this Submission.” *

I SHALL not here enter into the tedious Wrangle
 and Wrong Turn which this Writer delights to give
 the Question about the motive of our Submission, as
 it charges his Opponent with asserting the Magistrate
 to have the Authority of God to back him in the
 Acts of Injustice, having already sufficiently ex-
 plain’d my self on that Head, and resolv’d it, not as
 he loves to represent it, into any Authority or Com-
 mission he has from God so to act, but because it is

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the

* Answer to Dr. Atterbury, p. 92.

the Will of God, notwithstanding this, that we should submit.

WHAT I would therefore chiefly attend to, is what he himself allows to be a sufficient Reason for Submission in all private Cases, the Public Good. And here I must freely declare the Reason in the Application seems to me of equal Force to a Number of Men, as well as particular Persons. I must own there is abundance of Care taken in this Distinction; and when Numerals are descended to, not above one is ever nam'd: But does not this Gentleman think a whole Body or Corporation, as much Subject to this Rule, as one particular Man? If he does not, he has certainly Feed very ill Council, and should he appear in Arms against the Government, at the Head of the greatest Corporation in the Kingdom, in order to repel Force with Force, if he had not more Strength than Law on his Side, he'd certainly find public Order and Government deem him and all his Party no better than Rebels and Traitors.

THIS, tho' it must be allow'd in the Sense of all the World, to be nothing but Matter of Fact, yet may not perhaps be thought directly entering into the Nature of the Argument; let it therefore be impartially consider'd, whether the Nature of Government, or what is here call'd Publick Good, doth not as much require Submission from a whole Body of Men to its Governors, as it doth from a single Man?

IN order then to the giving this Matter as clear a Light as we can, and evince the Parity of the Reason of both Cases before us, let us distinctly consider it both as apply'd to the Magistrate, who is the Agent, and the People injur'd who are the Subject.

AND

AND first as to the Magistrate.

THE Act of Injustice done by him, is both in Matter and Form the very same to a single Man, as a whole Community. The being ruin'd and murder'd, with abundance of other terrible Words, which are often us'd in this Debate, by the unjust Decision of the Magistrate, may be, nay is more likely to be, the Case of a single Man than a whole Community. The Magistrate too in all his Determinations, acts in a public Capacity, which supposes every Man thus equally Subject to such his Determinations.

Secondly, As to the Subject or Person injur'd by such Determinations, his true and proper Rights are the same with that of a whole Community. The Laws of God, of Nature, and all the World, are as much of his Side. What then can make the difference? Is it that the Resistance of a single Man will more disturb the public Peace, than that of a whole Community? None can be so mad to say so. He that talks at this rate, seems to know no difference between a private Duel and a public Massacre. Public Good, it is allow'd, can't be preserv'd, were one Man allow'd to rise against the Magistrate: Sure then much worse must be the Case, when all are in Arms.

SHOULD we consider the Parallel, with regard to the Provocation by the Magistrate, it will still yet appear more favourable in the Case of a single Man, than that of a whole Body or Community. For tho' indeed in this Controversy we are very much us'd to the dreadful Sounds of whole Communities being ruin'd, murder'd, and destroy'd by the Tyranny and Barbarities of their Princes; yet surely they that

talk of these sad Things, forget the Prince to be a single Man, and the aggregate Body of the People a vast Number, and as such, impossible to be destroyed by his single Hand, or Will. If *Ahab* has a mind indeed for a poor *Naboth's* Vineyard, it is very easy for him to procure two Sons of *Belial* to swear him out of his Life; but who he will get to be such his Instruments, when the whole of a Community are equally affected by the Sentence, is hard to conceive. We have indeed in History mention of *Caligula's* wishing the People of *Rome* to have but one Neck, and we have too this mention'd to us very gravely in this Debate, but sure no Man ever took any thing of this Nature to be more than rant and madness, and to draw Conclusions from such Premises can be called in my Thoughts little better. Certain it is, if the imminency and nearness of the Danger can be made a Reason for Resistance against the Magistrate, the single and private Man has much more to say for himself, than can be possibly offer'd for a whole Community, and therefore upon that Account the Wonder increases, that it should be lawful for a whole Body of People to resist the unjust Determinations of the Magistrate, and yet unlawful for a single Man,

FURTHER still. It is as much the Duty of a whole Community, not to assist a Prince in the Execution of his unjust Determinations, as it is not to resist, tho' he should unjustly determine; and if none does assist him, what can he do of himself, and how long Time think you will it take him to destroy a Nation with his own single Hands? In short, what is call'd a total Subversion and Destruction in the Case of Tyranny, is what is impossible in Nature, and therefore absurd in the Supposition; and when-

whenever 'tis mention'd, it shews the Cause only to be supported by Fiction and Romance.

THERE is not a sounder Maxim in Politicks, nor what all the World has more generally receiv'd and agreed to, *Than that the Government of the worst of Tyrants, is better than Anarchy and Confusion, and the Violence of a Lawless Multitude.* And indeed 'tis so very plain in the mention thereof, that in the Competition between them, the Gentleman himself we have so long contended with, seems to give the former the Preference, and when he states the Question before us as an Objection, adds, *There would be some colour therein, were there no middle Condition between Tyranny and Anarchy; or that it were impossible to oppose Princes, without running into a lawless and ungovern'd Condition.*

AND pray what is this middle Condition that this Gentleman can propose, where Things are brought to the sad Extremities of a whole Nation being in Arms against their Prince? The Answer to this Question is, by asking another, which because the Management of it is pretty extraordinary, and will help us to see the utmost that can be said on both Sides, in the great Pinch of the Argument, I shall present it the Reader as stated by this Gentleman himself. It is observ'd then,

then, That it is better for the Common Good, to continue subject to the Government even of the most cruel Tyrant, than wholly to shake off his Yoke; better than be under no Government, better than to place all their Hopes in Force and Arms. For nothing can be imagin'd more miserable than that State, in which, when the Reins are taken out of the Governors Hands, the People are carry'd headlong whithersoever they please, and without Restraint or Punishment, commit whatsoever their ungovern'd Lusts prompt to; all Reverence of Laws, all Authority of Magistrates being trampled under Feet.*

WELL, and is not all this true? Yes and allowed to be so too. Why then, one would think the Conclusion is undeniable, that the public Good is more effectually preserv'd by even the most Tyrannical Governors, than it can possibly be by a Nations returning to Arms and Resistance. This too is not, as I can see, deny'd neither. Where then, you'll say, lies the Difference between the contending Parties? Why that, it seems at last, lies in the wrong stating of the Question, which is not, Whether it be better to continue subject to the Government of even a most cruel Tyrant, than to place all our Hopes in Force and Arms; But better than it is to shake off his Yoke, and to put our selves under a juster and milder Government. Well, be it so.

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* Answer to Dr. Atterbury, p. 125. Ib.

IN Answer thereto, we may be very direct and plain, viz. That if this Change must be made by public Arms and Violence, it is better to submit even to the most Tyrannical Government; because in the first place, the Remedy it self is worse than the Disease; And secondly, it is very uncertain, whether by such means we shall at last mend our selves by the Change. That the Remedy is worse than the Disease, is confess'd even by the Gentleman himself, where the Means us'd are Arms and Resistance; and he must be ill acquainted with the common Events of War, that disputes their Uncertainty. If he does not at last allow of such Means to be us'd in order to such a Change, the whole of what he contends for falls at once, and neither Divinity, Reason, Self-Defence, no nor Public Good can justify the Doctrine of Resistance; and he that pleads for it, pleads for both Anarchy and Rebellion.

To tell us the sad Confusion and Devastation that always attends a Civil War in particular, is not a necessary Consequence thereto, but only flows accidentally therefrom, is talking like one that does not know what War is. What can be call'd Cause and Effect, if these are not so? and when a War has been never so prudently and wisely concerted, who has been able to separate them? The Comparison between resisting, and the Invasion of a Foreign *Prince, is wild and Extravagant, and has been before so sufficiently Consider'd, that I shall not again trouble the Reader with it. And as to that of Separation

on from a * Church where the terms of Communion are Sinful, the question is not about Passive-Submission, but Active; and our Separation too in such a Case, expressly Commanded by God himself; and if this does not make a Disparity, we would fain know what will.

THE whole of this Work presents itself now Reader to your Judgment; and the great Questions you have to consider are, whether the Law of God, his Nature and Attributes, and the Nature of Society exact the duty of Passive-Obedience and Non-Resistance to the Magistrate. If what is presented in these Papers is not sufficient to determine you; Pray God Almighty, I say, direct you to form a right Judgment in all things, and at least keep you from rashly Condemning any of the Truths of the Gospel, how fashionable soever it may be to do so.

I should now put a Period to these Sheets, but I am very sensible all will be thought exceeding defective, if one Question is not consider'd, and that is, whether by this Doctrine if it be true, the Lives and Fortunes of a whole Nation are not entirely subjected to the Will of a Tyrannical Prince.

ANSWER, No.

FIRST, because it is absurd and impossible, in the Nature of the Thing, they should be so subjected. And secondly, Because if they were, a whole Na-

* Ibid. p. 126. † Measures of Submission, p. 76.

Nation might preserve itself from his Attacks, without any thing like Resistance by Arms.

As to the first Reason.

I KNOW it is very common in this Debate to hear such Words, as total Destruction, universal Ruin, and the like; but what Prince will they produce who talk at this rate, who shall appear to be such a Tyrant? This is to make him act the ridiculous Part of destroying his own Relation; and where he is once suppos'd to have destroy'd all his People, he himself must go to the Forests for Subjects.

BESIDES, how must he do this? With his own Hands, for not one of his People's ought to assist him; And this brings me to the Second Reason.

AND in this I have so fully express'd my Thoughts before (tho' I must own my self a very young Casuist, when it came from me) that to make it appear I have not alter'd my Opinion in this Matter, even from the first of my Thoughts about it, I shall make my self the Complement of putting what is there said among my other Quotations.

'IT may be remember'd, that by Resistance, it was said, was not understood the bare opposing a Prince's Will; and also, That we are not oblig'd to give him Active Obedience in Things Unlawful. This being premis'd, it will soon appear

* See Doctrine of Passive-Obedience stated, &c.

‘pear, that a Prince is not able to Oppress his People, if he would never so fain. But if the People all keep steady to their Duty, and don’t in the least recede from it, to gratify his Desires, it is out of his Power to affect them; if his Soldiers desert him, or at least Disobey his Commands; if his Judges tell him his Proceedings are directly contrary to the Laws of the Land; if his Divines inculcate his Breach of his Coronation Oath, and thereby contracting the heinous Guilt of Perjury: If his Council dissuades him, his Ministry neglects him, his Parliament expostulates, or admonishes him; and in fine, his whole Kingdom remonstrates against his Conduct, and earnestly intreats him to desist from oppressing them; if all this be done, as ’tis certain it may and ought, what Prince can be so Savage, so void of Gratitude and common Humanity, still to continue Tyrannical to a People, which he can’t but know deserve better Treatment, and more obliging Returns? Or at least, what hurt can he do of himself to a People resolutely bent to Oppose (tho’ not Fight) him in all his unlawful Desires.

‘WHERE then is that Necessity for Resistance, that some so earnestly contend for, since we may as well, nay, better, preserve our selves without it? One would think, the unhappy Consequences we of this Nation particularly have involved our selves in by Resistance; That Innocent Royal Blood, which we have just Reason to think still cries for Vengeance against us; That constant Series of Confusion, which has ever since been its unhappy Appendage: Our present Feuds and Animosities, Distractions and Divisions, would now all present themselves to our View, with Argument more moving, than Language can possibly Form. Let this then

‘ then plead, let this convince us of the Impiety, Injustice, Unlawfulness, and Impolicy of Resistance.

THERE have been, and it must be own'd, very frequently too, Topics made use of in that Controversy, very distinct in their Nature, both from Reason and Scripture; but as every thing of that kind is allow'd by the Gentlemen we are concern'd with themselves, to conclude nothing at all in the Point; I shall neither perplex my self nor the Reader about them. A great deal more too might be said to the Topics already made use of; but what has been consider'd, having swell'd these Papers beyond what I at first design'd; this, I hope, will excuse the Omissions of this kind. As nothing mov'd me to the whole, but a sincere Perswasion, that the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience and Non-Resistance is truly a Doctrine both of Reason and the Gospel: A Doctrine, however of late hunted and made appear Odious, in its Nature the most peaceable and innocent in the World, I am naturally led to hope from the Pains I have taken, some may be induc'd to entertain the same Sentiments concerning it.

IN an Age of Free-thinking, I am bold to presume, even I need not Apologize for speaking my Thoughts; and tho' they may not carry so much Freedom in them, as some may think necessary: Yet they are not so much enslav'd as to be bias'd by the Corruptions of the Times. Far be it from me to imagin, but that there are many better and far abler Pens to manage this, or indeed any other Controversy, than mine; but I bless God, here I have the Advantage of most, even of such Pens, that I have
nei-

neither Fear nor Interest, to warp the Natural Dictates of Conscience. I mean not to reflect on any but the Guilty, and to those may the God of Truth give every Word I say a double Edge.

I **M**U**S**T own, 'tis a shocking Sight to see how tenderly some Gentlemen (whose particular Province it is to defend the Truths of our Holy Church and Religion) speak of what they know in their Consciences to deserve their severest Rebukes. In Comparisons indeed, their Part is abundantly preferable to that of those who openly revile and blaspheme them; but yet it is great pity such Gentlemen will not consider, that to be Actively Honest, is as much a Duty, as to be Passively Obedient.

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